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ESPAILLAT SPEAKS ON STATE OF THE DISTRICT



Photo courtesy of the Office of Sen. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

REP. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT (NY13, 2nd right) poses for a photo during his annual State of the District address at Columbia University in Manhattan on Sunday, Jan. 29, 2023, With (l to r) Gov. Kathy Hochul, U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and other supporters.

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Rep. Adriano Espallat (NY-13) hosted his annual State of the District address on Jan. 29 at The Forum at Columbia

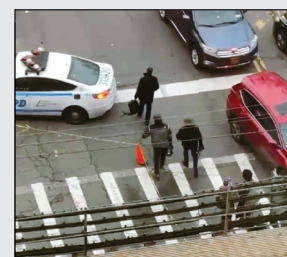
University in front of a packed auditorium with many more waiting outside. As usual, the event was an occasion to highlight the congressman's legis-

lative victories and present his legislative agenda for the 118th Congress.

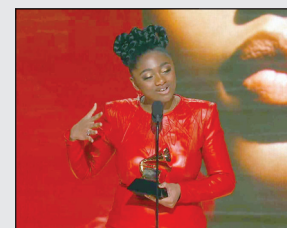
During his address, Espallat, a Democrat, commit-

ted to increasing funding for public safety, community and cultural programs, infrastructure development, and educa-

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Bronxite, Samara Joy, Wins 2 Grammys
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M.S. 20 Hydroponic Farming Program Expands
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Teen Critical after Stabbing in Fordham Manor

By DAVID GREENE

Parents making their routine trip to pick up their kids from school in Kingsbridge Heights were horrified recently to learn that a 16-year-old male youth had been stabbed. Police said the teen remains in critical condition as police search for the suspect who reportedly plunged a knife into the victim.

According to an NYPD official, the incident was reported at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 31, on Jerome Avenue, between West 195th Street and West Kingsbridge Road on the border of Kingsbridge Heights and Fordham Manor.

The NYPD official told *Norwood News*, “A 16-year-old male was stabbed in the stomach and taken to Jacobi Hospital.” The official added that the victim was removed from the scene in critical condition and that police were looking for five people who fled south on Jerome Avenue after the stabbing.

According to police radio communications, officers from several nearby precincts could be heard coordinating in order to close off several streets along the route to Jacobi Hospital to assist the ambulance get there quicker.

After the stabbing, Citizens’ App user, “bcyde,” posted a message, writing, “Very sad. Literally saw the paramedics and cops racing the kid to (the) ambulance while trying to resuscitate him. Hope he makes it.”

Another user of the social media crimefighting app, “bxbillster,” wrote that he had seen the victim’s bleeding wounds. “I was just picking (up) my kid from school and when I got out, I went to see what happened... It’s crazy; these little kids doing this kind of stuff.”

Another Citizens’ App user, “The-BronxUser570119007,” alleged to have witnessed the incident and disputed the NYPD’s version of five suspects, writing, “The five males were his friends. It was two people who did the crime.”

The same social media user added, “I saw it all with my eyes. It all happened because some guy was going down from the train station and then the guy pushed the kid and pulled a knife out, and the kid ran but got stabbed twice. I hope the kid makes it.”

The incident took place as most students were either leaving school or about to leave school for the day. The site of the incident is located about one block south of P.S. 340 on West 195th



Photo courtesy of the Citizens App

A POLICE VEHICLE blocks traffic at West 195th Street and Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor after a 16-year-old male teen was stabbed in the stomach and critically injured on Tuesday, January 31, 2023.

Street, one-and-a-half blocks from P.S. 86-X, located at 2751 Reservoir Avenue, and two-and-a-half blocks from Walton High School and the International School for Liberal Arts, located at 2791 Reservoir Avenue.

A resident of Bronx Community District 7 later told *Norwood News* he had heard the student attended Walton High School. We contacted NYC Department of Education (DOE) for comment and were referred to the NYPD for further details of the incident.

A DOE spokesperson provided the following comment, “The safety of our students is our absolute priority. NYPD immediately responded to an incident that occurred across the street from campus after dismissal, and the schools in the immediate area went into a shelter-in. We have deployed additional resources to the campus and school communities to provide our full support to students and staff.”

The incident comes less than two weeks after a 13-year-old student at a middle school in Fordham Heights was arrested after he was allegedly found to be in possession of a loaded gun.

As reported, an NYPD spokesperson said that on Thursday, Jan. 19, at

around 9.20 a.m., police were alerted that there was a gun found inside M.S. 363 (previously M.S. 399) Academy for Personal Leadership and Excellence, located at 120 East 184th Street in Fordham Heights.

“Upon arrival, school safety agents stated that a 13-year-old male student was in possession of a loaded .22 revolver, an imitation firearm, ammunition, and a boxcutter in his backpack,” the spokesperson said.

The teen was taken into custody by a school safety agent and later taken to the 46th Precinct, police said, adding that no injuries were reported as a result of the incident. They added that the school does not have a scanning system (metal detector) in place. The unnamed student was charged with criminal possession of a weapon and unlawful possession of a weapon.

On the same day, Jan. 19, two teens were shot outside Longwood Police Athletic League, located at 998 Longwood Avenue. Police said one of the two teens, Josue Fenton, 15, of the Laconia section of the Bronx later succumbed to his injuries.

Norwood News will continue to follow this developing story.

Former Fordham H.S. Student, Samara Joy, wins 2 Grammys

By DAVID GREENE

Bronxite and alum of both Fordham High School of the Arts and SUNY's Purchase College, Samara Joy [McLendon], was a relatively unknown jazz singer before she was awarded a Grammy for Best New Artist at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards held at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles on Monday, Feb. 5.

Joy beat out a field of newcomers including Anitta, Omar Apollo, JD Beck, Molly Turtle, and Tobe to capture the coveted prize. During her acceptance speech, the 23-year-old Castle Hill native appeared flabbergasted, telling the recording world's A-list stars, "I am so... Oh my gosh! I can't even believe... I've been watching you all

my life on TV for so long!"

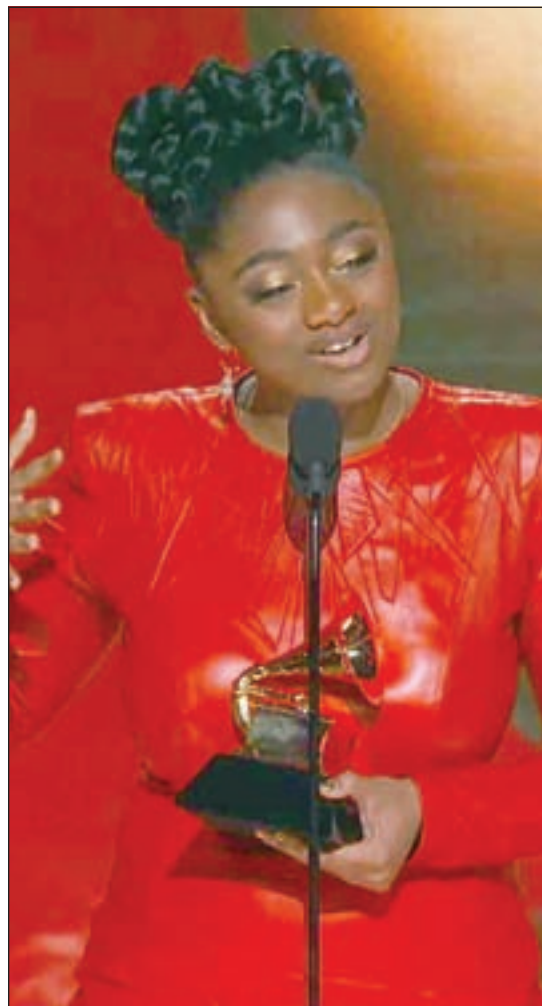
Joy continued, "So to be here with you all, born and raised in The Bronx, New York... my family's here... I've been singing all my life... Thank you so much for this honor. All of you are so inspiring to me, so to be here because of who I am... all of you have inspired me because of who you are."

Joy had taken home a second Grammy earlier in the evening when her 2022 album "Linger" won Best Jazz Vocal Album. *Norwood News* contacted Belmont's Fordham High School of the Arts via NYC Department of Education (DOE) for a comment on Joy's win. As of press date, we had not received a response.

Meanwhile, Manhattan-based New York Youth Symphony has become the first youth orchestra to ever win a Grammy. The orchestra, whose members range in age from 12 to 22, took home their Grammy Sunday night for Best Orchestral Performance for their untitled album, recorded during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. The record's producer, Judith Sherman, also took home a Grammy for Classical Producer of the Year.

According to Wikipedia, Joy recorded her first self-titled album while still in college, and her win for Best New Artist makes her only the second jazz singer to win the award, the first being Esperanza Spalding in 2011.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Screenshot courtesy of The Grammys via YouTube

HOLDING HER SECOND of two Grammy Awards, Jazz singer and Bronxite, Samara Joy, thanks fellow musicians for inspiring her during the 65th Grammy Awards ceremony held in Los Angeles, CA, on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



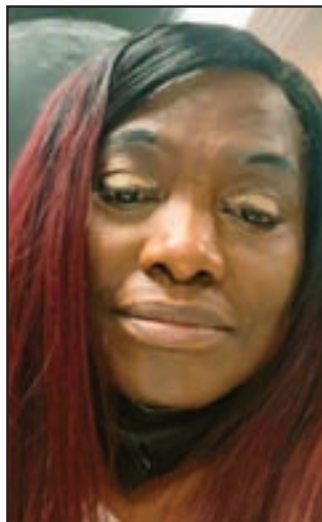
This week, in recognition of Black History Month, we asked readers their thoughts on the proposed bipartisan African American History Act which, if passed, would invest \$10 million over the next 5 years to promote and support education programs dedicated to African American history.



"I think they should sign this legislation with the hope that all Black and brown communities will also have their stories told. Truth be told, as a Puerto Rican-American, our story has not ended, and the exploits have only hurt us as a people on an island that everyone wants a piece of since 1898, and we as a people and culture are still being crucified. When will it stop?"

Esther Pagan,
former Tremont resident now living in Bushkill, PA.

Photo courtesy of Esther Pagan



"The re-introduction of the African American History Act has my unwavering support since our ancestors contributed significantly to the establishment of this nation and still do. American history is Black history. The United States must be transparent about how it got to this point of racial injustices, police violence, and the killing of Black and brown people. Our African American communities are being threatened by the rise of nationalist and pro-white supremacy organizations in society and in the government. Therefore, a complete ban on studying Black history must be avoided. What causes their phobias - the apparent truth? Black history education will be available to students across the nation as a result of this act."

Dr. Marylean Wroten,
Longwood

Photo courtesy of Dr. Marylean Wroten



"I would say it would be a good thing for the African American community. I think it will be a great benefit helping us, not just during Black History Month, but 365 days a year, and it would be a positive inspiration for our people in the community. I think in the broader context it can also enlighten some others, non-Black. I think it's going to be a good thing for all - Whites, Asians. It gives us a chance to see our lives through other people's eyes and I think that's a good thing."

Bryan Gerard Briggs,
Wakefield

Photo courtesy of Bryan Gerard Briggs



"The injustices that have plagued our nation for years are centered in White fragility, supremacy and the miseducation of youth of color. This is only present to serve one purpose, to be able to control an entire group of people. Knowledge of self and Black love are paramount in elevating African American people to equitability... I wholeheartedly support the bill to restore dignity to our teachings, so that our true history is learned."

Shanequa Charles,
Fordham Manor

Photo courtesy of Shanequa Charles



"It's about more than rights; it's about humanity. The lack of appreciation for the actual humanity of Black people is a learned behavior that has been indoctrinated into the dominant population for centuries. This is directly connected to the deliberate omissions of Black excellence from curriculum throughout all of academia. Also, to continuously hear so many supposedly enlightened and 'liberal' people and pundits allude to Black history being part of, or 'inextricably connected to' American history reveals a disconnect even in their 'support,' for their language speaks to a separation that shouldn't exist."

Wallace St. Clair,
Claremont Village

Photo courtesy of Wallace St. Clair

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Yadhira González-Taylor Inducted as Civil Court Judge

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Belmont native, The Hon. Yadhira González-Taylor, a lawyer, veteran, educator, retired firefighter, children's author, and mother of three, was formally inducted as a civil court judge of the City of New York for Bronx County on Sunday, Jan. 29 at Monroe College. It followed her November 2022 general election win when she garnered 23.30 percent of the vote, along with fellow Democrats, the Hon. Michele Davila who won 22.82 percent of the vote, the Hon. Sophia Herschman who won 20.11 percent and the Hon. Cynthia Isales who won 19.56 percent.

Among the attendees were Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), State Sen. Luis Sepúlveda (S.D. 32), Alina Dowe, Bronx borough director of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, District 18 City Council Member Amanda Fariás, District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley, District 13 City Councilwoman Marjorie Velázquez, Marion Frampton and other members of TBS New Direction youth mentor program, and Ramdat Singh and Abigail Martin of the Unity Democratic Club.

Singh described Gonzalez-Taylor



Photo courtesy of Councilwoman Amanda Fariás

(L TO R) the Hon. Yadhira González-Taylor and District 18 City Councilwoman Amanda Fariás attend the induction ceremony at Monroe College of the González-Taylor as a Bronx County civil court judge on Sunday, Jan. 29, 2023.

as a fierce Latina that made everyone proud. "Thankful for your friendship and community-centered mindset," he wrote. "Excited to watch your tenure on the bench."

Meanwhile, Fariás congratulated Gonzalez-Taylor, a Walton H.S. graduate, as one of her favorite people, saying she was most deserving of the title of judge. "Years serving in a multitude

of ways to The Bronx, to our families, to young people, you show up for what you believe in, support who you believe in, and have fought to get here, where you will continue to fight for all of us," Fariás wrote.

She continued, "It's the type of leadership we need in our court system, in

The Bronx, and in Latino leadership in this city. Thank you, hermana [sister], for continuing to create more pathways for young Latinos, lawyers of all ages, Bronxites, to see another example to aspire to. I'm excited to serve this borough with you. I'm so proud of you. Congrats!"

Bronx BP Launches Digital Community Board Application Process, CB7 Hiring District Manager



Photo by Síle Moloney

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 former district manager, Ischia Bravo (right) presides over the September 2022 Bronx Community Board 7 general board meeting held at Montefiore Medical Center in the Norwood section of The Bronx, in the presence of some of the other Bronx Community Board 7 board members.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson announced on Jan. 24 the launch of the Bronx's first-ever online community board application process, available in English and Spanish, adding that the launch was an effort to prioritize fairness, equity, and broader participation that, according to Gibson, mirrors the diversity in all 12 Bronx community boards.

Each year, the Office of The Bronx Borough President accepts applications from city residents who reside, work, and/or have professional or other significant interests in the borough. According to Gibson, the new digital application process should make applying easier, more accessible, and should ensure the Office reaches a wider and more diverse applicant pool.

"Our community boards play such a vital role in decision-making processes throughout our city, and it is important that membership reflects the rich diversity of the neighborhoods they represent," said Gibson. "We hope by making the application process digital, and avail-

able in English and Spanish, we are eliminating unnecessary barriers for Bronxites to participate."

She added, "Now, more than ever, it is important to have our residents' voices heard and represented on important issues in our borough. We encourage everyone eligible to apply to do so, and to share the information with their friends and family."

In addition, the borough president is also encouraging youth aged 16 and older to apply for community board membership, as her office is working to ensure greater youth participation. According to the most recent demographic report by the borough president's office, Bronxites aged 16-24 made up only a small percentage of community board members in the borough.

"For some of our youth, their first interaction with government is attending a community board meeting and it can spark an interest for them to be civically engaged in their neighborhood," Gibson said. "We need to be in our schools, at the community centers, afterschool

(continued on page 8)

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Raye Bairbieri New CEO of KHCC

The Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC), a 50-year-old settlement house serving over 6,000 Bronx residents, announced on Jan. 6 that Raye Barbieri has been named chief executive officer. KHCC officials said Barbieri has more than 25 years of experience working with nonprofits and New York City government. They said she succeeds Margaret Della, who is stepping down in March, after successfully leading the center since 2016. Barbieri will assume her new role on March 13.

According to KHCC, Barbieri currently serves as chief program officer at JCCA, a child welfare, behavioral health and wellness organization serving children, youth, and families across Greater New York City. KHCC officials said at JCCA, Barbieri manages a team of more than 700 staff members. Previously, they said she served as a deputy commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services, dedicating her career to supporting families and communities.

Sanchez Introduces Bill to Curb Homelessness

District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez introduced new legislation on Jan. 19 that would expand eligibility for the City Family Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) housing voucher program. CityFHEPS is a rental assistance supplement that helps people find and keep housing by assisting both those at risk of homelessness and helping those referred by certain City agencies to avert shelter entry.

CityFHEPS also helps people experiencing homelessness or living in a City-run shelter to obtain permanent housing. The new laws would prohibit NYC Department of Social Services (DSS) from requiring impacted people to live in shelter before becoming eligible for a CityFHEPS rental assistance voucher.

It would also disallow DSS from using the preservation of a rent-controlled apartment or receiving adult protective services as criteria to determine eligibility for CityFHEPS. Additionally, the bill would provide people with the opportunity to demonstrate risk of eviction with a rent demand letter as a means to meet eligibility for CityFHEPS.

It would also remove the work requirement in order to become eligible for a CityFHEPS rental assistance voucher, and would change the maximum total gross income for eligibility for a CityFHEPS rental assistance voucher from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 50 percent of the area median income. The bills have been heard by the relevant Committee and will move through to the next legislative step.

Meta Agrees Plan to Comply with Fair Housing Act

Following a settlement of a discrimination case on June 27, 2022, regarding housing ads, Meta Platforms, Inc. (Meta), formerly known as Facebook, Inc., is required to change its ad delivery system to prevent discriminatory advertising in violation of the Fair Housing Act ("FHA").

Counsel for the U.S. Justice Department's civil rights division said the department reached a key milestone with Meta on Jan. 9 and the company has since built a new system to address algorithmic discrimination, known as a Variance Reduction System.

According to The White House, algorithmic discrimination occurs when automated systems contribute to unjustified, different treatment of people, disfavoring those based on their race, color, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, gender identity, inter-

sex status, and sexual orientation), religion, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other classification protected by law.

On Jan. 9, the parties agreed on Meta's compliance targets [regarding algorithmic non-discrimination] and ensures Meta will be subject to court oversight and regular review of its compliance targets under the settlement through June 27, 2026.

New York City Council Celebrates 370 Years

New York City Council has passed its 370th birthday. The Council shared that on Feb. 2, 1653, the town of New Amsterdam became the first self-governing place in America, and the precursor to the New York City's legislative body was formed.

Ciara Gannon Joins Bronx BP's Office

Former Bronx Community Board 8 District Manager Ci-

ara Gannon has resigned from her role to take up a new position as director of community boards at the Bronx Borough President's office. The news was shared by a representative of the Bronx Borough President's office during the January Bronx Community Board 7 general board meeting. On Jan. 30, CB8 published a message, bidding Gannon farewell and wishing her all the best in her new role.

Samantha Zherka Announces Run for CD13

Republican / Conservative candidate, Samantha Zherka, announced on Jan 27 that she is running for New York City Council in District 13. "I have such a strong passion to make NYC safe again," she said. Zherka most recently ran as a conservative/republican candidate against now-State Sen. Nathalia Fernandez (S.D. 34) in the November 2022 general election, winning 35.1 percent of vote. Republican/Conservative candidate, Phyllis "Tiz" Nastasio, is also running to unseat incumbent Democrat, Marjorie Velázquez.

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Letters To The Editor

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

Biden: What Emergency?

"Biden will end bug emergency rules on May 11," read the Jan. 31 NY Daily News headline. U.S. President Joe Biden told Congress on Jan. 30 that the declarations related to the COVID-19 pandemic will end on that day. We live in the only developed nation that does not have complete health care coverage for all of its citizens.

While senator and two-time presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, continues to advocate for Medicare-for-all, Biden opposes it. He thinks former U.S. President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act is more than good enough, even though it does not cover everyone. But in his own words, Biden thinks it's "a big f---ing deal."

With the end of the declarations, many will likely lose access to Medicaid when states are allowed to unenroll them. The Affordable Care Act will not be "a big f---ing deal" for them. In an updated, Feb. 2 article, entitled, "COVID in the U.S: Latest Maps, Case and Death Counts," The New York Times reported that there was still a 7-day-average of 41,771 new COVID cases a day and 453 deaths. Can Biden predict that both numbers will be anywhere near zero by May 11?

Biden benefits from following the worst president in history, and even Donald Trump was better on foreign policy. At least we were not close to World War III under him. But the man who would be king provides cover, so many people don't realize just how terrible Biden is.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Editor's Note: A Minority Staff Report dated Oct. 21, 2020, prepared for the use of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations entitled, "The Cost of Trump's Foreign Policy: Damage and Consequences for U.S. and Global Security," provides a critical review of the former president's foreign policy approach.

Transit Issues

The NYC Transit Riders Alliance "The NYC in 6" plan calls for investment in transportation to support around-the-clock transit service. Under this plan, trains and buses would arrive every 6 minutes. It sounds great on paper. Riders would never have to wait more than 6 minutes for the next bus or subway train.

There is always a fixed cost per hour for any mode of transportation. This includes equipment (bus, subway car, train, or ferry purchase), straight line depreciation of equipment over time, mileage, driver, engineer or ferry boat captain's salary, conductors, ticket takers, deck hands, fuel or power and maintenance of equipment.

The costs of all of the above for any promised, 6-minute service intervals could easily add up to the hundreds of millions, if not \$1 billion or more annually. This is based upon the need to purchase more equipment, replace existing equipment sooner, as it is used more frequently and reaches retirement age sooner, expand maintenance and storage capacity at existing bus depots and rail yards, staffing, maintenance, cost for fueling buses, along with powering subway trains while in transit service.

Those working on NYC Transit maintenance

and capital improvement projects on and adjacent to tracks would have to stop and resume every few minutes as subway trains pass active work zones. This will add time needed to complete routine daily safety inspections and maintenance activities. Capital improvement projects will take longer to finish with additional, incurred costs.

TANSTAAFL, "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch," or in this case, a 6-minute wait for a bus or subway train. Someone will have to pick up the tab. It could result in higher fares, tolls, increased future congestion pricing, and taxes.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Waste of Time by Manhattan DA

How fortunate we are in The Bronx to have DA Darcel Clark who would never waste her resources as DA Bragg in Manhattan is currently doing. Manhattan has so many unsolved murder cases from Harlem and Washington Heights especially from the crack wars of years gone by. We can all agree that those murderers have gone on to kill more people for the simple fact no one is looking for them. But what does Bragg do? He convenes a Grand Jury to waste time to prosecute former President Trump for allegedly giving hush money to a stripper. No one should condone extra marital affairs which Bragg is basically investigating, but that's between Trump, his wife, and the stripper. When this case goes to trial, remember sex sells and people will ignore the crime around them. Maybe our Bronx DA should take over that Manhattan Office!

**Richard Marias
Norwood**

Editor's Note: Former President Donald Trump is not being investigated because he allegedly paid porn star, Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, \$130,000 for her silence regarding their alleged extramarital affair. The initial probe, as reported by Vox, was that federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York alleged this payment violated campaign finance law.

They alleged the money was spent to help Trump win the 2016 election, and as such, should have been both disclosed as campaign spending, and the amount should have been subject to legal limits. Prosecutors didn't pursue the probe further at the time since, in their view, other more serious Trump controversies and alleged violations merited greater focus.

According to media reports, as part of the latest investigation into this alleged "hush money" payment, prosecutors are alleging the payment was classified in accounting records as "legal fees" which, if true, would contravene certain business laws. The former president denies both the alleged affair and any allegations of misconduct or campaign violations.

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 BP Launches Digital Community Board Application Process, CB7 Hiring District Manager

(continued from page 6)

programs, and anywhere else youth congregate, and encouraging them to apply. Our young people have great ideas, but we need to give them the platform to express themselves."

As stated in the borough president's September 2022 Strategic Policy Statement, The Office of the Bronx Borough President will also work with the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to provide guidance and information to eligible students aged 16 and over in Bronx high schools to apply to their local community board.

Like many community meetings which are attended by volunteer members of the community, for the most part, Bronx community board meetings are usually held weeknights from around 6.30 p.m. While this schedule probably suits many who, as part of their job, work the conventional 9 to 5 shift, it may not be so convenient for residents / students who work split-shifts or evenings, or for those who work weekends, whose days off fall during the week.

In any case, applications are now open and can be completed online here: [\[boropres.nyc.gov/community-boards/\]\(https://boropres.nyc.gov/community-boards/\). The deadline for submission of applications for the next round of appointments to all Bronx community boards is March 3.](https://bronx-</p>
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As previously reported, Yajaira Arias was elected chair of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) at the November 2022 board meeting and Ruth Caraballo was recently elected CB7 secretary at the January 2023 general board meeting. CB7 is currently recruiting for a district manager to replace Ischia Bravo who started her new role as Bronx County Clerk at Bronx Supreme Court in early January.

The deadline for submission of applications for the role of Bronx Community Board 7 district manager is Feb. 27. Visit <https://www.nyc.gov/jobs> and enter the job ID 571641 to apply. Existing City employees should visit <https://www.nyc.gov/ess> and enter the same code.

Meanwhile, former Bronx Community Board 8 district manager, Ciara Gannon, recently joined the Office of the Bronx Borough President as director of community boards, leaving the CB8 district manager role vacant. Bronx CB8 advises the public to call (718) 884-3959 for any inquiries.

M.S. 20 Hydroponic Farm Program Expands to 20 Schools

By DAVID GREENE

Members of NY Sun Works, a non-profit that builds innovative science labs in urban schools, through its Greenhouse Project Initiative to educate students and teachers about the science of sustainability, joined Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson at Norwood's P.S. / M.S. 20's hydroponic farm on Wednesday, Jan. 25, to announce the expansion of hydroponics farm technology to 20 local schools.

According to verticalroots.com, put simply, hydroponics is a way to skip the soil, sub in a different material to support the roots of the plant, and grow crops directly in nutrient-rich water.

The \$2.5 million boroughwide project would put thousands of K-12 students in new state-of-the-art, hydroponic farms, teaching sustainability, climate, and food justice. P.S. / M.S. 20, located at 3050 Webster Avenue, was selected as the site of the announcement as the school already has a successful hydroponics urban farm program.

Manuela Zamora, executive director of NY Sun Works, said of the planned expansion of the program, "This expansion will not only bring hands-on hydroponic farming curriculum to hundreds of students in The Bronx but will also empower them to take action, become advocates and be part of the solution to our growing climate crisis."

She added, "This incredible investment will also help combat food insecurity in underserved communities and cultivate our city's next generation of environmentalists, climate



Photo courtesy of NY Sun Works

BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA Gibson (4th left) joins officials from NY Sun Works and staff of P.S. / M.S. 20 in Norwood on Jan. 25, 2023, for the announcement of a hydroponics farm program expansion to 20 Bronx Schools.

conscious and community leaders."

The foundational elements for hydroponic farming are fresh water, filtered with a balanced pH, oxygen, which can be provided through an air stone or by installing an air pump, root support materials like vermiculite, perlite, peat moss, coconut fiber, and rockwool, nutrients like magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, and light.

P.S. / M.S. 20 principal, Dr. Carla Ling, said of the school's existing program, "Our hydroponics farm classroom has opened a unique educational experience to our students that engages them in STEM in an innovative and exciting way." Ling added, "Urban farming creates a hands-on learning environment that fosters students' interest in the life sciences, climate change, and food justice, and we

are incredibly proud to celebrate this Bronx expansion."

For her part, Gibson said of the program expansion, "It is an unfortunate fact that Black and brown communities are by far the most affected by climate change and systemic environmental injustice in our city."

She added, "If we are unable to undo the mistakes of the past, then we must do everything in our power to ensure our youth

are also part of the solution. That is why today, I am honored to be here for the opening of these state-of-the-art hydroponic farm classrooms that will empower our young learners across The Bronx."

District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz was also present on the day, and said, "As a former public school environmental science teacher, a hydroponic farm classroom was only some-

thing my students and I could dream of, but now it's a reality for so many."

According to a statement by NY Sun Works officials, of the 20 schools opening new hydroponic farms, 13 will be funded directly by Gibson's office, six more will be funded by city council members who are part of the Bronx delegation, and the last school will be funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The new program will bring hydroponic farms to a total of 35 Bronx schools by the end of the 2022-23 school year, and officials said it's estimated that the program will reach about 8,000 students per year.

The announcement comes as part of the upcoming annual Bronx Week which will celebrate established partner schools with the borough's commitment to education on the effects of climate change. Partner schools will receive ongoing development training from NY Sun Works, with weekly visits from a hydroponics specialist who will teach system maintenance, and will offer support in planting, harvesting and distribution support.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

Book Review: "Begin Again, James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own," by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

By JIM FAIRBANKS

Glaude's title of "Begin Again" [Crown Publishing, 2020] calls us to renewed action for racial justice. He gives hopeful examples of past Black rights gained, such as the civil rights laws during Reconstruction after the Civil War, and during the Black Power movement of the 1960s. Yet, he writes that each effort was followed by White backlash Baldwin calls the "After Times."

We are again living in the "After Times" now! This book is not a hopeful story of change; this is a sobering book. Glaude Jr. quotes American sociologist, socialist, historian, and Pan-African civil rights activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, when he says our task of "beginning again" is "a hope, not hopeless, but unhopeful."

Baldwin tells of history and memory between what actually happened, and the kinds of stories we tell about what happened, and for what purpose. The American history we face is not a history of racial justice progress, but what Baldwin calls "the big lie" and the betrayal of history by white supremacy.

It is what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called "a poisonous fog of lies." It is what DuBois called "lies agreed upon." Decades ago, DuBois said what is true today: "We have too often a deliberate attempt to change the facts of history so that the story will make pleasant reading for White Americans."

Baldwin proposed various solutions, writing, "A moral vision requires a confrontation

with history, with slavery, and the ongoing consequences of the After Times, to establish the ground upon which to imagine the country anew."

He said the story we tell about what the country is, and thus who we are, shapes the world we make going forward. After King Jr.'s death, Baldwin wrote, "The tangible things that happened to me - and to Blacks in America - during that whole terrible time was the realization that our destinies are in our hands, Black hands, and no one else's."

He added, "In their pursuit of a more just America, they made a choice to not adjust themselves to the status quo, and to put their bodies on the line for a different America where Black people, and those

(continued on page 15)



Photo courtesy of NY Sun Works

YOUNG FARMERS AT Norwood's P.S. / M.S. 20 look over their crops at their state-of-the-art hydroponics farm on Jan. 25, 2023, as Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and NY Sun Works announce the expansion of the public schools hydroponics farming program to 20 local schools.

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



Fordham Heights: Three Men Assaulted

Three men were assaulted, police said on Saturday, Feb. 4, at 1.10 p.m. at 221 East 188th Street [Valentine Deli Corp.]. Police said a 32-year-old man got into a verbal dispute with an unidentified person who threw a garbage can over the counter, went around the counter, and struck the victim with a miniature bat on the back of the head. They said the attack caused a laceration to the victim's head, abrasions to the upper back, and swelling to the lower back. The victim was removed to a local hospital.

Police said during the same incident, a 29-year-old man was also struck in the back of the head. Additionally, as the men were arguing, they said a 24-year-old male victim attempted to stop the fight but was also struck with a miniature baseball bat to the left side of his head, causing pain and swelling. Neither the 29-year-old victim nor the 24-year-old victim were hospitalized.

Joseph Santiago, 32, of Ander-

son Avenue in Highbridge, The Bronx was arrested and charged with two counts of assault, two counts of harassment, and criminal possession of a weapon. Bashar Al Zawqari, 29, of East 188th Street in Fordham Heights was also arrested and was charged with assault, menacing, and criminal possession of a weapon. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Mt. Eden Hit & Run

Police said that on Jan. 23, at 6.20 a.m., police officers responded to an incident in the vicinity of 1590 Jerome Avenue where they said it was reported to police that a 2011 Acura had driven through the security fence of an auto repair shop and that the driver of the vehicle then fled the scene without exchanging any information. There were no reported injuries.

Lawsuit Filed re 2022 Fordham Manor Fire

Lawyers at The Legal Aid Soci-

ety has filed a lawsuit on behalf of 12 rent-stabilized tenants in Fordham Manor, seven of whom have been displaced to City shelters after a fire ravaged their building located at 2490 Davidson Avenue in September 2022.

The lawyers said the fire caused severe damage to common areas of the building and resulted in City agencies issuing vacate orders. The complaint seeks immediate repairs to the building – which has a total of 260 housing code violations issued by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), so tenants can safely return to their homes.

The lawsuit was filed against landlords Shkurt Dedvukaj, Paul Dedvukaj, Creston Real Estate Advisors Inc, and 2490 Properties LLC, for failing to make repairs and neglecting hazardous conditions, including electrical system problems, and failing to maintain the emergency exit door in a code-compliant manner.

Off-Duty Firefighter Arrested For DUI

An off-duty firefighter has been arrested in The Bronx for driving while intoxicated police said. An NYPD spokesperson said that on Friday, Feb. 3, at 9.44 p.m. José Valdez, 37, an FDNY firefighter was arrested in the 45th Precinct which covers the neighborhoods of Co-op City and City Island in the Northeast Bronx.

Valdez was charged with driving while intoxicated, leaving a scene with property damage as a driver, driving while impaired by alcohol, and refusing to take a breath test. 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.

Mystery Surrounds Norwood Man Death

By DAVID GREENE

More than five months after a Norwood man was found dead inside an apartment, where a second man may have been removed by paramedics, the NYPD, FDNY and the Office of the City's Medical Examiner have remained silent as regards updates on the case, despite several requests for information.

According to police officials, officers from the 52nd Precinct were called to 16 East 208th Street and De Kalb Avenue at 10.22 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 26, 2022, where they discovered Adam Perez, 44, inside a third-floor apartment. Perez was "unconscious and unresponsive" and was pronounced deceased at the scene. At the time, police said the medical examiner would determine the exact cause of death.

Following the incident, Citizens' App staff, who monitor police communications, posted that based on what they heard, a man had been fatally injured in an as-

sault and a suspect had been detained. An additional post read, "Police have received a 911 report of a man unconscious and bleeding after fighting with another man." Another post outlined how police were requesting a second ambulance. The last post read, "Officers reported that a man was fatally injured in an assault and advised that they detained the suspect."

On Tuesday, Jan. 17, Perez' ex-girlfriend, who asked not to be identified, and who is the mother of his children, spoke to *Norwood News*, saying she was displeased with the investigation into the incident, and alleged a detective on the case was not getting back to the family with updates. She also alleged the family were unable to get the victim's personal property back, including his cellphone which she said could provide key answers to a family seeking closure.

Meanwhile, the victim's mother, who also asked not to

be identified, said she could only speculate as to what happened her son. She told *Norwood News*, "This happened in someone else's house. We don't know the person." She continued, "We only know that the girl he was last seeing supposedly had broken up with him, and we don't know if she texted him to come over. We don't know because we don't have his cellphone or his property yet."

The mom also alleged the autopsy report lists "homicide" as the cause of death but does not include details of any marks on the victim's body. She continued, "When we did the funeral, he had like a big stitch on the back of his head... It looked like somebody took chunks off his skin. So, it doesn't match up to what people are saying."

The mother said she believes the five marks on Perez's face were caused by punches and added that there were no marks on his face earlier on the day he

died. To date, *Norwood News* has been unable to obtain the official autopsy report.

Asked about the Citizen Apps posts which talked about a reported second person injured on the night of Perez's death, the mom said, "They said the second person they took was injured. We don't know how he was injured. They only said they found two unresponsive people, they were both male, and one of them was deceased and the other one's in the hospital."

A father of four children, the victim's ex-girlfriend described Perez as a "family man," a description echoed by a longtime friend of Perez. His ex-girlfriend also said Perez immigrated from Mexico to the U.S. at age 10 or 11 and settled in Norwood. Most recently, she said he worked in a local deli, making sandwiches. She said that when he wasn't working, "Everywhere he went, he took his kids."

Meanwhile, the mom con-

cluded, "So my kids are asking me questions. I tell them I don't know. I wish I had the answers." She said the second apparent injured victim, who Citizens' App users said had been taken into custody, was released from the hospital, and later "lawyered up" and was being uncooperative with police.

On Sunday, Feb. 5, a resident of the building where Perez died, said she had heard a "rumor" that the death was ruled as a homicide but was skeptical this was the case. She alleged that a second man in the apartment had been arrested and that after his arrest, the landlord quickly took action to have him removed from the building, and that another family was now living in the apartment where the incident took place.

The NYPD, FDNY, and the Office of the City's Medical Examiner have not responded to requests for comment. *Norwood News* will continue to monitor this case.



By Nereyda Franco, MPH, MCHES

February is the time of year when people across the country celebrate all matters of the heart. Many focus on the perfect gift or plan the perfect date for their sweetheart on St. Valentine's Day. At Montefiore Einstein, we bring our attention to the physical health of our hearts.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in every three deaths are related to cardiovascular disease, also known as heart disease. With such alarming statistics, we must ask, "What matters when it comes to heart health?"

A great place to start, is learning about your risk factors. Risk factors are habits and characteristics that can increase your risk of heart disease, which can lead to a future heart attack or stroke.

According to the American Heart Association, some risk factors for heart disease include:

- smoking
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- overweight or obesity
- family history of heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic inflammatory conditions (for example, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, HIV/AIDS)
- history of preeclampsia or early menopause

Many risk factors can be changed and managed and others cannot. Eating heart healthy foods, exercising, and taking medicines as prescribed can help you lower the risks of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco use, and obesity. These are critical steps that can truly make a difference.

It is important to work with your health care provider to help you understand your risk factors and find ways to make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce, control or prevent heart disease. Here are a few tips to help you on the path to good heart health:

Eat a healthy diet. A heart-healthy diet includes plenty of fruits and vegetables and whole grains like oatmeal and brown rice. Try to add foods high in healthy fats like omega-3 fats (for example: avocado, salmon, and sardines). Reduce processed foods, and saturated fats, limiting your intake of bacon and cold cuts. Choosing lean ground beef and skinless chicken or turkey can help cut down on saturated fats. Fat-free and low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt are good options.

Stay active. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise 3 to 5 days a week. Regular physical activity can help you lose weight, lower your stress, and improve your mental health. Your doctor can help guide you to the types of physical activities that are safe for you. Every little bit of physical activity counts, including things like housework or garden-

ing. Don't forget to have fun with it!

Quit smoking. It is one of the best things you can do to protect your health. Ask your health care provider about tools and resources to help you quit.

Manage stress. Too much stress may increase blood pressure. Everyone experiences stress, so it is important to be aware of when and how it affects you. Talking to a professional counselor, meditating, exercising, and talking to friends and family can help lower your stress levels.

Matters of the Heart

At Montefiore, we have many resources to help you care for your heart. Montefiore's Office of Community and Population Health is offering free virtual classes during the month of February on high blood pressure. Classes focus on addressing barriers to self-management and offer strategies for better blood pressure control. For more information about these programs, contact our Community Health Specialist Carlos Tejeda, at cteveda@montefiore.org.

You can also visit Montefiore's Heart Health website at <https://www.montefiore.org/heartmonth> for lots of helpful heart-health resources. For more tips and tools follow Montefiore on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn throughout the month of February. Use the hashtags #MonteHeart and #stayheartsmart to search for the latest information from Montefiore and share your questions and comments.

This February make time for loving and protecting your heart and the hearts of those you love!

Nereyda Franco, MPH, MCHES is a health educator in the Office of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

Join Cultural Caravan Productions, Inc., The Bronx County Historical Society, The Bronx African American History Project, the Eta Omega Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Cedric Fergus, and Fordham University's Center for Community Engaged Learning at the Bronx Library Center at 310 East Kingsbridge Road, The Bronx on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 2.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. for a screening of Louise Dente's award-winning documentary, **"AJASS: Pioneers of the Black is Beautiful Movement,"** followed by a panel discussion, and the honoring of Bob Gumbs 1939-2022. Reserve tickets online at shorturl.at/ciEU6.

ART

City as Living Laboratory (CALL) presents **Tibbetts Estuary Tapestry** by artists, Ana de la Cueva and Matthew López-Jensen, at the Van Cortlandt House Museum, located at Broadway and West 246th Street, The Bronx. Following its opening on Dec. 10, 2022, this exhibit will continue through March 2023.

A reception to launch the exhibition, **"Queer Love: Affection and Romance in Contemporary Art,"** will be held at Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard, on Tuesday, Feb. 14. The exhibit 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 will run from Feb. 14 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 with the event title.

Bronx River Art Center (BRAC), located at 1087 East Tremont Avenue, The Bronx presents **"Scaling Nature"** a show of large-scale, mixed-media installation works by three artists, Michele Brody, Linda Cunningham and Wildriana Paulino, curated by Gail Nathan from Jan. 19 to March 4, 2023. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, Jan. 19, from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. Visit www.brac.org for more information.

MUSIC

The **Revolution of Hip Hop** exhibit at Bronx Terminal Market remains open Tuesday to Saturday from noon to 7 p.m., and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. Visit the Universal Hip Hop Museum's website at hmm.org for more information.

A new **Hip Hop show, KWIK2ROK**, has premiered on BronxNet to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop this year. New episodes will be broadcast every Thursday at 8 p.m. on www.bronxnet.tv.

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard, The Bronx, is proud to present the return of **Grupo Niche** for an unforgettable concert to celebrate Valentine's Day on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m. The best-known Colombian salsa group, Grupo Niche, is known for both up-tempo and vigorous dance music as well as slower-paced salsa romántica numbers. Musical director Maestro José Aguirre oversees every small detail in keeping with the Grupo Niche style created by the late Maestro Jairo Varela. For more information, call the Lehman Center box office at (718) 960-8833 or visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/grupo-niche>.

The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts will present the **Lviv National**

Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, performing classic compositions of Brahms and Sibelius on Feb. 19, led by principal conductor, Theodore Kuchar, and featuring violin soloist, Vladyslava Luchenko. The special program will include Brahms: Tragic Overture, Op. 81, Brahms: Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77, and Sibelius: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43. For more information, call the Lehman Center box office at (718) 960-8833.

Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE) String Quartet presents **"BAE Virtual Concert Hall: Caribbean Music and More,"** performing works by Black musicians in the Americas on Thursday, Feb. 16, at 1 p.m., a free virtual event. From the folk songs of Jamaica and Haiti to Florence Price's monumental Five Folksongs in Counterpoint, this online show is not to be missed. For more information, visit <https://www.bronxartsensemble.org/events/>.

MOVEMENT

Get **Crazy for Composting** with the NYC Compost Project hosted by The New York Botanical Garden on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Enjoy workshops and connect with like-minded people and community partners who know that making and using compost is the climate-friendly way to greener communities and to grow food. Connect with our community partners for educational, technical, volunteer, and grant opportunities. Partners include NYC Compost Project, NYC Department of Sanitation, Bronx Green-Up, Big Reuse Curbside Composting Outreach, NYC Parks GreenThumb, and the New York Restoration Project. Enter a raffle for a chance to win a compost delivery for your Bronx community garden or public greening project. To RSVP, visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/crazy-for-composting-2023/>.

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. Visit <https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/jobs/lifeguards> for more details.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



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 Moshulu 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/smart-composting for more information.

D Subway Line Track Maintenance Ongoing

The MTA has advised of ongoing repairs to the **D line** 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 line 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. A free shuttle bus transports passengers to Moshulu Parkway subway station which serves the 4 line.

Road Closures

Metro Erectors Inc. has advised of a road closure at 3054 Villa Avenue between Bedford Park Boulevard and East 204th Street from Jan. 20 to Feb. 20.

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

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.

Adams Ends Vaccine Mandate for City Workers

Mayor Eric Adams announced on Feb. 6 that with more than 96 percent of city workers fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the city will make vaccination optional for current and prospective city workers effective Feb. 10, pending

the expected ratification of the decision at the next Board of Health meeting.

City officials said the mandate helped keep New Yorkers safe and New York City operations running throughout the pandemic. The added that with the majority of City workers and New Yorkers now vaccinated, and with more tools readily available to protect people from serious illness, the vaccine requirement has served its purpose, driving vaccination rates up among the City's workforce during a critical period in the pandemic.

Officials said that while the 1,780 former employees (roughly) terminated for failing to submit proof of vaccination will **not** be able to automatically return to their previous positions, they **will** be able to apply for positions with their former agencies through existing City rules, regulations and hiring processes. They said the City will also end the vaccination requirements for non-public school, early child care, and day-care staff.

As part of this change, from Feb. 10, visitors to Department of Education (DOE) school buildings will no longer be required to provide proof of vaccination, allowing students' families and loved ones to attend school activities, celebrations, and events. The necessary amendments to the City's vaccination policy for current City employees and DOE visitors are expected to be made at the next Board of Health meeting on Feb. 9, officials said.

Safer Internet Day

Feb. 7 marked Safer Internet Day. According to The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE), the day is celebrated in approximately 180 countries and territories worldwide and is dedicated to raising global awareness of emerging and current concerns regarding online safety.

Center officials said, "We strongly believe that children deserve safe environments where they can connect, learn, love, and thrive both off and online. Advances in technology have sparked positive, new opportunities for children to grow. However, they have also opened the door to serious threats and profound harms to children's safety and wellbeing."

Rather than improving with time, officials said these problems are worsening at an exponential rate, with the Internet Watch Foundation reporting 2021 as the worst year on record for online child sexual exploitation.

They said while the scope and magnitude of the dangers may seem daunting, change is possible if everyone fights to secure a safer, more joyful future for our children. Further information can be found at <https://endsexualexploitation.org/> and searching for "internet safety."

Citizenship Fee Increase

Applying for citizenship is going to be more expensive. Don't wait to apply. CUNY Citizenship Now will help you

completing the necessary forms. Call (646) 664-9400 for eligibility requirements and to register.

State of the Borough

The Bronx State of the Borough address will be delivered on Wednesday, March 1, at Manhattan College, Kelly Student Commons, 5th Floor, 3900 Waldo Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463, according to the Office of the Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson. The borough president said, "We have made so many strides in our quest for a better Bronx, and we cannot wait to share with you all that we have done, and all we hope to accomplish." RSVP at bit.ly/ZK67.

Job Fair

New York City Citywide Administrative Services (ACS) is hosting a job fair on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 420 West 45th Street New York, NY 10036. Learn about jobs at over 20 City agencies. Register at bit.ly/CareerFairNYC. Masks are required and will be available upon request.

New Building at 2741 Creston Avenue, Kingsbridge Heights

Building applications have been filed with NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) for a new, 9-story, mixed-use building at 2741 Creston Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, as reported by YIMBY. Located between East 196th Street and East 198th Street, the lot is near the Kingsbridge Road subway station, serviced by the 4 train. Boris Babakhanov of Queens-based, Bolex GC Corp. is listed as the owner behind the applications, according to YIMBY.

The proposed 80-foot-tall development will yield 28,245 square feet, with 26,092 square feet designated for residential space, and 2,153 square feet for commercial space, to be used as a ground floor, daycare facility. The building will have 44 residential units, most likely rentals, based on the average unit scope of 641 square feet. The concrete-based structure will also have a cellar and a 30-foot-long rear yard.

Issac & Stern Architects is listed as the architect of record. Demolition permits were previously filed, and the site is now vacant. An estimated completion date for the new building has not yet been announced.

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!

City Budget Public Hearing

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson said a City budget public hearing will be held on Thursday, Feb. 16, at 11 a.m. to give an opportunity to those wishing to speak out on the mayor's proposed budget and the capital and service needs of Bronx neighborhoods. Verbal testimony will be limited to 3 minutes. To register online, visit bit.ly/fy23bronx-budget.

COVID-19 Updates

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

To help curb the 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>.

MPV Updates

City health officials announced on Feb. 1, an end to the MPV [monkeypox / "mpox"] outbreak. The news comes as transmission remains "very low" in the City for two consecutive months health officials said, adding that the declaration followed the successful vaccination of more than 100,000 New Yorkers, and community partnerships in education and behavior change. Visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page> for more information.

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 501(c)(3) 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>.

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.



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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place via Zoom on 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** 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** board meeting will be held on Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2114033690>. Join by phone on: +16465588656, Passcode: 2114033690#. Contact cgannon@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

CORRECTIONS

In the *Norwood News* edition January 12-25, 2023, in our front-page story entitled, "The Bronx Celebrates Three Kings Day," in the 8th paragraph on page 15 and in the front-page photo caption, Gonzalo Duran's first name was incorrectly spelled. Also, in the fourth paragraph on page 15 of the same story, we incorrectly referred to Kingsbridge Unidos as a nonprofit. In fact, it is a volunteer group.

In the *Norwood News* edition January 26-Feb. 8, on page 8, "Letters to the Editor," the first letter, "Phony Ethnic Politics" was by Richard Warren, Van Cortlandt Village, **not** by Richard Marias. We apologize for these errors.

Vigil Held in Bronx for Tyre Nichols

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson hosted an interfaith prayer vigil on Feb. 1 on the Steps of Borough Hall at 851 Grand Concourse to honor the life of 29-year-old Tyre Nichols who was violently beaten by five police officers during a routine traffic stop in Memphis on Jan. 7 and died a few days later in

hospital. "I pray that we remember the way Tyre Nichols lived and not the violent way he was taken from his family and friends," said Gibson. "Our Black men deserve better, and this is our opportunity as a community to come together to pray for healing and peace." A number of other Bronx elected officials issued statements denouncing the killing.

Espaillet Speaks on State of the District

(continued from page 1)

tional initiatives. “We created and passed legislation to create jobs, to help small businesses, to address climate change, to lower the cost of healthcare, and foster opportunities for families right here in the 13th congressional district,” he said during his address.

Among the guest speakers on the day were New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Gov. Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, and U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. A host of Bronx and other elected officials were also in attendance. Among them were Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, and District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz.

Addressing those gathered, Hochul said of Espaillet, “He has been shoulder to shoulder with me as we march towards diversifying our courts, making sure that people have opportunities that they deserve based on their qualifications and we’re going to continue to do that anywhere we can.”

During the speeches by Adams, Hochul, and Espaillet, there were interruptions by several demonstrators who were protesting the sending of large amounts of funding to Ukraine instead of using that same money to help those who live in New York City. The demonstrators were escorted out as the crowd became more and more impatient with the repeated disruptions.

“We’re on the verge of nuclear war because of you,” said one male demonstrator during Espaillet’s speech. “So much money for Ukraine, but what about for Harlem?” As the protestor was escorted from the auditorium, Espaillet said, “We love him anyway.”

The congressman’s latest redrawn congressional district 13 covers much of northern Manhattan, including Inwood and Washington Heights, as well as the western Bronx neighborhoods of Marble Hill, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Jerome Park, Bedford Park, University Heights, and parts of Fordham and Morris Heights.

For his part, Adams said, “The congressman speaks [for] the people who sent him to Congress. You see him on

the ground among the people; this is a people’s congressman in a real way, and he represents the voice of the people who sent him there.”

Espaillet is the first Dominican American and the first former undocumented immigrant to serve in Congress. He was first elected to Congress in 2016 and is serving his fourth term.

He currently serves as a member of the influential U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, responsible for funding the federal government’s vital activities. He is also a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

The congressman said one of his three largest projects for the upcoming year is the Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment, since the Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) project was abandoned towards the end of 2021.

As reported, revisioning workshops led by the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, elected officials, including District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, have been held in recent months in conjunction with NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) officials in order to obtain input from local residents, community

groups and business owners on the armory’s potential use.

The workshops are ongoing through March. Espaillet said the armory is one of the largest in the nation, with over 180,000 square feet. Currently, it is poised, vacant, and ready to be redeveloped and put to community use. “This project, once completed, will send a clear message to the world that we are back, and that we will rebuild The Bronx,” Espaillet said.

The second project referenced by the Congressman was the start of the second phase of construction of the Second Avenue subway in Manhattan. The project would extend the Q line to Harlem’s 125th street. The line currently extends as far as 96th Street, a stage completed in 2017.

According to the MTA, the second phase of construction will include three new, ADA-accessible stations at 106th Street, 116th Street, and 125th Street. “It will connect El Barrio and Harlem with the rest of the world,” Espaillet said.

The third project is an Uptown Cultural Center planned for Inwood in Northern Manhattan. According to Espaillet, the project will receive a \$10 million allotment from City Hall.

Meanwhile, as part of Espaillet’s public safety initia-

tives, he said \$530,000 will be invested in the “Credible Messenger Mentoring Initiative,” which seeks to use credible messengers who are able to connect with and motivate at-risk youth.

The congressman said he also secured over \$16.2 million in federal funding for community initiatives, including \$1 million for the Abyssinian Development Corporation, a group based in Harlem which provides support in terms of housing and other community needs.

In addition, Espaillet said \$2.2 million will also be going to the City College of New York for an infrastructure workforce training program and center. Another \$1 million will go towards Brotherhood Sister Sol for after-school programs.

Espaillet will also commit to funding environmental efforts on both a federal and local level. He highlighted the work of WE ACT for environmental justice, an environmental advocacy group based in West Harlem. Espaillet said he is urging Congress to listen to grassroots climate organizations located in communities of color as it implements its \$16 billion infrastructure bill.

Later, Schumer said of Espaillet, “I have never met anyone who has fought so hard for his community and beliefs. There’s no one who has

a passion for the people he represents and one who is as effective for the people he represents than Adriano Espaillet.” He added, “So I can tell you this, the State of the District would be a lot worse without Adriano Espaillet.”

For her part, Gillibrand said, “In Congress, the congressman has done extraordinary work identifying the areas of greatest need and delivering the funding needed to move those projects forward.” She added, “I know that he will continue to have a profound impact on his district and I’m eager to continue to work with him and elevate the state and the 13th district to be even stronger and better.”

At one point, a moment of silence was held during the proceedings in observance of the death of 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, who was brutally beaten by five Memphis police officers on Jan. 7 during a routine traffic stop, and who died in hospital three days later.

The congressman closed his speech, referencing other planned projects for the district in the future, including the \$2 billion Fordham Landing redevelopment project in University Heights, which he said would “revitalize community spaces” and bring affordable housing to the area. “The state of the district is strong!” Espaillet concluded.

Book Review: “Begin Again, James Baldwin’s America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own,” by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

(continued from page 9)

on the margins of this society, might flourish.” According to Baldwin, “We must search for an elsewhere to begin anew – to love, to critically assess who we are and who we aspire to be, and to seek refuge in the margins, to fortify our imaginations so we can rejoin the battle.” Baldwin also had some proposals for White people. “You have a lot to face... All that can save you now is your confrontation with your own history... which is not your past, but your present... But your history has led you to this moment, and you can only begin to change yourself and save yourself by looking at what you are doing in the name of your history.”

Glaude Jr. writes how

“Whites use history to reinforce injustices of the past,” and discusses “all of this hard work, almost Sisyphean labor, in a country so wedded to its legends, and so in need of its illusions.” He adds, “Black folk have sacrificed generations trying to fight it all, and here we are still fighting for an understanding of American history that will finally set White folk free.”

Rev. Jim Fairbanks is editor of the “Saving Justice” newsletter, author of “The Religious Institutions of The Bronx and Manhattan,” a former minister, a former chief-of-staff for two council members, a College of New Rochelle professor, and a father.

Dr. Eddie S. Glaude Jr. is a Princeton University profes-



Photo courtesy of Thomas Hawk via Flickr.

A PHOTO OF an artist’s depiction of acclaimed writer, James Baldwin, taken on Sept. 1, 2018 (location unknown).

sor, author, political commentator, and public intellectual who examines the complex dynamics of the American experience. His New York Times bestseller, “Begin Again: James Baldwin’s

America and Its Urgent Lessons for our Own”, takes an exhaustive look at Black communities, the difficulties of race in the United States, and the challenges we face as a democracy.

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