



NORWOOD NEWS

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH MARKED IN THE BRONX



Photo by Síle Moloney

CHERYL GARLAND JOHNSON, president of the Bridgefield Civic League (left) joins honoree, Miriam Quiñones, District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley and another attendee at the Bridgefield Civic League Women's History Month celebration on March 18, 2023 at 3551 Laconia Avenue in Williamsbridge.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, who made history as the 1st woman and African American to serve in her role, hosted her 2nd Annual Women's History Month Celebration on March 16. Held at Fem Hundra Hall,

located at 2341 Hoffman Street in the Belmont section of The Bronx, she paid tribute to five trailblazing Bronx women whose strength and persistence, mixed with compassion and empathy, she said, have worked to guide the borough through turbulent times.

"Women's History Month is an opportunity for us to highlight all we have accomplished and all we still need to do to achieve gender equity," said Gibson. "With setbacks in the fight for reproductive justice and our continued fight for pay parity,

(continued on page 19)



Theory 9 Honored for uplifting Rising Kings
pg 3



Parking Lot Fire Leaves Drivers Stranded
pg 12



DOT Addresses Gun Hill Road Traffic
pg 16

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NCB Staff Get NYBG Parking Due to Safety Concerns

By ARIEL PACHECO

During February's health and human services committee meeting for Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), a representative from NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx (NCB) provided updates to over a dozen participants in attendance on several topics, including a citywide behavioral health project, new-look ambulances, and Botanical Garden parking for NCB staff.

According to Alfredo Jones, a representative from NCB, NYC Health+Hospitals, the City's public hospital system, received a memo from Gov. Kathy Hochul requesting the provision of 253 additional behavioral health beds across City hospitals to address the behavioral and mental health needs of New Yorkers.

Jones said NCB currently has 23 behavioral beds which are not currently in use and that the hospital expects to make them available at some point between March and April.

Michelle Avila, chair of CB7's health committee asked whether the hospital planned to expand on that number at some point in the foreseeable future, to which Jones replied, "Based on the architecture of the facility, I can only offer the 23 that we have offline."

The conversation later moved to use of the Botanical Garden parking lot by NCB staff. Jones said the move towards using the parking lot sprung from safety concerns staff had expressed while using a parking lot located close to the last stop on the 4 train.

"Those concerns have forced our hospital to seek out other large parking facilities and the only other one that came up was the Botanical Gardens," said Jones. "We implemented the shuttle service [to and from the hospital] to give a slightly higher sense of safety," he said.

Jones said some NCB staff members had dealt with "some not so pleasant experiences" involving a shelter located next door to the parking lot but added the main reason for the move was because there had been "some concerns with the landlord [of the original parking lot]."

He said NCB now offers a shuttle service to its staff from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday, with the shuttle route modeled on the existing Montefiore Medical Center shuttle service, since Montefiore's staff also uses the Botanical Garden parking lot.

Another update provided by Jones was that NCB ambulances would soon be getting a new makeover. The hospital frequently transfers patients between its two campuses at NCB and Jacobi Medical Center and uses a common ambulance service.

As previously reported by *Norwood News*, the hospitals underwent a merger which began in 2019 to streamline certain services, including ambulatory services, to make them more efficient, and to help speed up accreditation requirements at both campuses.



Photo by Sile Moloney

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/North Central Bronx ambulances will soon be getting a new makeover. The hospital frequently transfers patients between its two campuses at NCB and Jacobi Medical Center with its ambulances serving both campuses.

Jones said the point of the new look ambulances was to help with non-critical transportation between the two campuses. He added that the two campuses have a greater need for ambulances on demand.

An update on a matter raised during January's health committee meeting was provided by Avila on the ongoing rat infestation in Community District 7. "I know that Jerome Gun Hill BID is doing a Rat Academy Training," said Avila. "I want to work with our other committee chairs to maybe do a cross-committee forum on the rat presence and what we can do as a community and neighbors to really address this."

CB7 Veterans' committee chair, Chad Royer, agreed, adding that getting the entire community involved would help to resolve the issue. "I think the biggest opportunity that we have is if we educate the community at large, including our folks who are responsible for our businesses and our buildings like supers and landlords," he said.

"If we reach out to them in a way that could get them on board that would help a lot of us in ways we don't understand," he added.

A second follow-up point from the January meeting was on New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) reaching a tentative agreement with Montefiore after their strike action that month. The community had wanted to hear from some of the nurses themselves about the new deal. Avila said she had reached out but hadn't received a response yet.

Community members were invited to raise other topics of concern towards the end of the meeting. One member was perturbed over supermarkets fail-

ing to offer brown paper bags to SNAP and WIC recipients, despite there being a requirement for them to do so.

Royer said he had difficulty disposing medical waste like syringes at CityMD clinics, despite signage that indicated such clinics supported proper medical disposal. He said if needles and syringes weren't disposed of properly, they could end up in landfills and put sanitation workers at risk. Avila responded, saying she would dig deeper into the issue to explore what could be done.

Jones said at NCB there are red bins where needles and syringes can be disposed of appropriately. "This is a community service," he said. "It's not specific to the hospital and we put it so that folks have a safe place to discard."

Another resident expressed confusion and concern over hospitals offering the yearly flu shot along with a possible yearly COVID booster shot. Earlier this year, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) outlined a plan for possible yearly COVID booster shots.

"From what we hear public health officials saying, it looks like the COVID vaccines are going to be introduced similar to flu vaccines, so you can get one on a yearly basis," Avila said, adding that more information on the issue would be provided at future meetings.

Robert Spencer from the Bronx District Attorney's office announced that the office would be holding its 6th annual Bronx child safety fair on Saturday, April 15, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Meanwhile, the next CB7 health committee meeting is set for March 23 at 6:30 p.m.

Sile Moloney contributed to this story.

Theory 9 Honored for Work with “Rising Kings”

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A last-minute change of venue brought District 14 City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez to P.S. 8 in Bedford Park on March 2 to present a proclamation on behalf of New York City Council to Bronx local nonprofit, Theory 9, for what was described as the group's continued community service and support of its “Rising Kings” basketball teams.

Established in 2019, Theory 9 has hosted many holiday events, basketball tournaments, and food drives in and around the Kingsbridge neighborhood, and its organizers, including Shakir Seagers and Izaiah Barrow, pride themselves on creating programs that introduce “knowledge, self-worth, and love” to youth while also bringing education to underserved communities.

During her remarks on the night, Sanchez paid tribute to Seagers and Barrow and said “So, we live in a community that has incredible challenges, right? We have a lot of problems that other communities don't face, and it's because of what we look like; it's because of our history. So, there's a lot of things that are stacked against us, but it doesn't matter because we got heart, right? We got Theory 9.”

Sanchez said she was proud to call Kingsbridge her home because it included the next generation of leaders like Seagers and Barrow. “Together, we're doing what the world says we can't,” she added. “We're looking outside and we're bringing resources in and we're lifting each other up.”

The councilwoman said Seagers, a musician, recording artist, teacher, and more, had a personal investment in the success of the community. “He's a staple,” she said. “He teaches and counsels y'all, the students who need the most support. Shakir makes sure that every youth has a mentor and that you have a fair shot to succeed. In only four years, Theory 9 has supported 2000 families, hosting over 150 events since launching. He also helped to replace the basketball courts in the area, create an educational curriculum, and started a new basketball team.”



Photo by Síle Moloney

MEMBERS OF RISING Kings basketball club shoot some hoops ahead of an event at P.S. 8 in Bedford Park on March 2, 2023, honoring the founders of nonprofit, Theory 9, Shakir Seagers and Isaiah Barrow, for their work uplifting their local community, which includes creating the basketball club.

Sanchez went on to describe how Barrow was known as the neighborhood floor-man due to his day trade which she said he learned on his first job site at 11 years of age, while his friends were hanging out in the park, from his uncle and granduncle, now 81. “He's not just a loving husband and father, but he's a master floorman,” she said, adding that Barrow was the embodiment of what it meant to find what you're good at, and then become the best at it. “They [his elders] taught him how to be a man and a gentleman,” she said.

At the event, Theory 9 was also presented with new equipment on behalf of Gatorade, and new basketball kits donated by Community Police Relations Founda-

tion (CPRF), a national nonprofit organization that helps serve marginalized communities in hopes of uniting and fostering a prosperous relationship between communities and local law enforcement.

David Seagers, 34, Shakir's brother, was also present for the presentation, ahead of his move to Vietnam to play professionally for a basketball team there. “I grew up playing in a local club in The Bronx, and it's taken me all around the world at this point,” he said. “I've been to over 30 countries playing basketball, and it all started on my end in Kingsbridge.” He said Indonesia was one of his favorite places, but he's also played

(continued on page 8)

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the possibility of criminal charges being brought against former U.S. President Donald J. Trump by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg in connection with an alleged hush-money payment to porn actress, Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.



"I think he's corrupted, and he deserves what he gets for what he did. He's going to New York City first. Well, actually he's got a lot of money, but I think he's guilty - simple. He paid a lot of women off. They're going to get him. They've got him on a lot of charges. They're all going to get him, he's corrupted. He really is."

Gregory Bryant,
Van Cortlandt Park West
Photo by David Greene



"Yeah, I heard he was surrendering on the news. Part of me thinks he might get off and part of me thinks that if the evidence is really substantial, he might actually go to jail for what he did. I think it's possible it can happen in New York, but he has such influential power over New York City that it wouldn't be fair to hold it (the trial) in New York City. But then again, it might be the perfect place to hold it in New York City because who knows Trump best then New Yorkers? He always goes to his supporters for help because he can't do it himself. Just look at the riot at The Capital; it's the same tactic."

Brandon Muhammad,
Norwood
Photo by David Greene



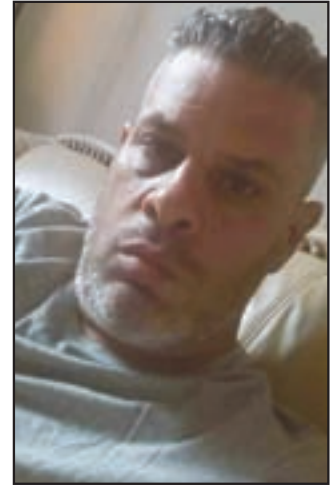
"That's it man, you know? Best of luck! You know they keep on with this guy saying he's got to pay his dues...whatever! If I was on the jury, I wouldn't convict him. Yes, he's innocent and that's what it is. Man, he's an innocent man, and it's a frame up. They're getting him all right. The outcome? Not guilty!"

Nico Paradise,
Bedford Park
Photo by David Greene



"People have had evidence on this man. Like, they probably have an entire library of evidence. Yes, lock that n----- up! I don't know about these other cases because we all know the justice system can be finicky. It's set up to work for high class people and people who are in the wealthy one percent. He falls into those categories so he may end up being acquitted, or he may end up with reduced charges. Oh no...this is why I'm off from the news, because it's always negative stuff, but even when I come back and tune into things, when I read the newspaper, it's always buffoonery! It's always clownery!"

Tamika Thompson,
Tremont
Photo by David Greene



"He deserves to go to jail. To be honest, it's not about taxes. It's because he has no respect for me as an American."

Steve Bobker,
Van Cortlandt Park South
Photo courtesy of Steve Bobker

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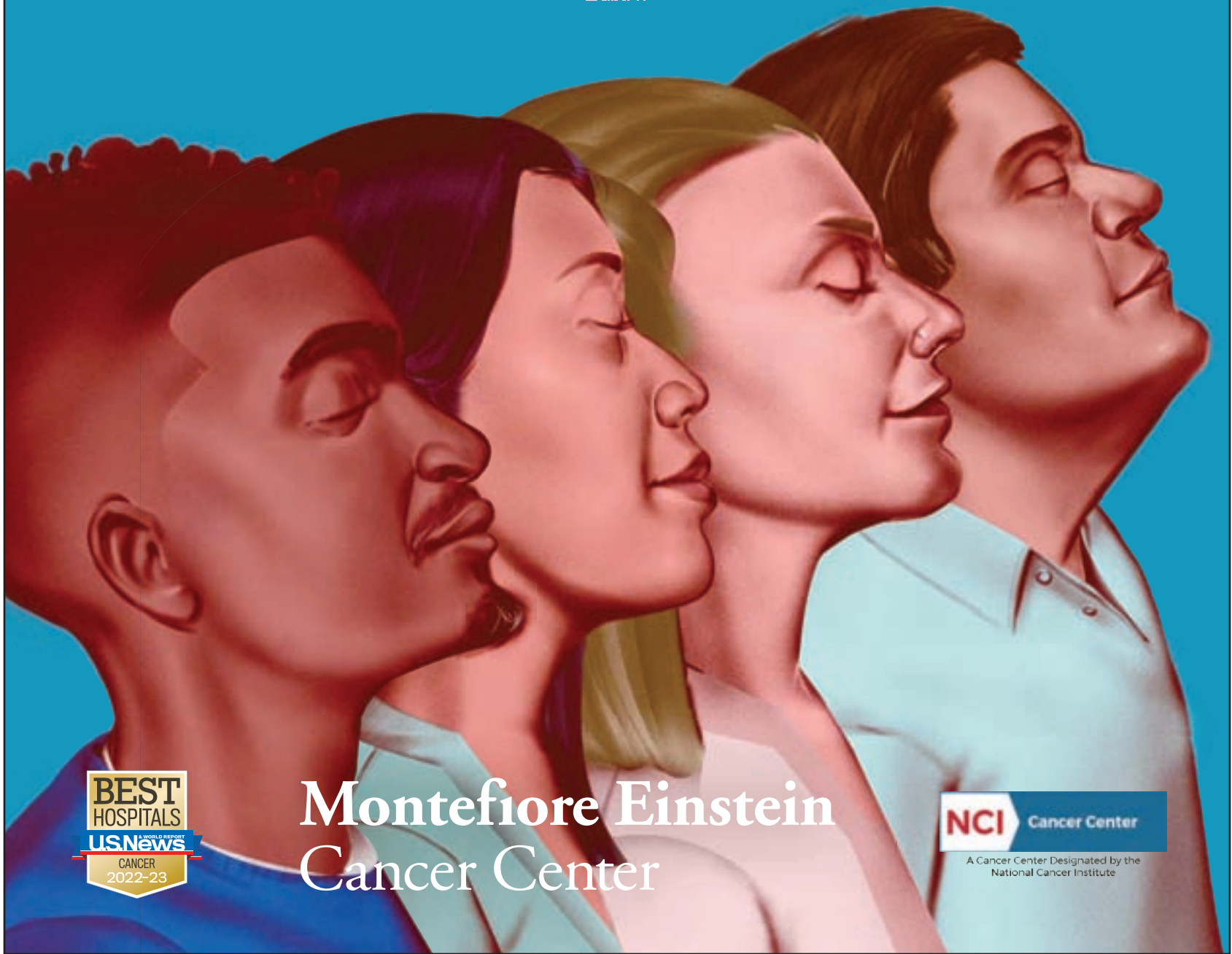
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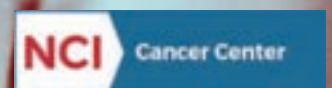
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A Bronx Voice Booms Beyond the Borough

By **JOSÉ A. GIRALT**

A new musical voice is emerging from The Bronx but this time it's not related to doo wop, *salsa*, or hip-hop, three musical genres often associated with the "Boogie Down." This new talent is breaking ground from her home base in Hunts Point and into the world of opera - yes, opera!

Linda Collazo has been developing her musical talents her entire life. Now, as a 27-year-old mezzo-soprano, she will make her Carnegie Hall debut on March 25, and a month later, she makes her Lincoln Center debut at Alice Tully Hall.

Although her success is the result of non-stop auditions and applications to sing with organized music groups, Collazo's invitation to sing at two of New York City's most renowned performance venues came as somewhat of a surprise. "I got this random email asking if I could sing at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center," she told *Norwood News* in a recent phone interview. "I'm not going to lie; I cried when I got that offer!"

She modestly credits her Carnegie Hall debut to "good fortune

and faith." However, it was her work ethic, combined with her special voice that set her on her chosen artistic career path.

During her first year at one of the City's most prestigious high schools, the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, [the "Fame" school] a teacher recognized the uniqueness of her voice, propelling her into academic vocal studies.

She went on to graduate from the very selective Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York (CUNY) with a bachelor's degree in music.

Growing up in the South Bronx with her parents, one Ecuadorian and the other Puerto Rican, and an older sister did not prepare Collazo for eventually rubbing elbows with the patrons of an art form usually associated with wealth and high social status, but through a network of encouraging music teachers, voice coaches, and fellow artists, she found a path to fulfilling her musical ambitions.

After college, she was invited to



Photo by José A. Giralt

OPERA SINGER, LINDA Collazo, performs inside Woolworth Chapel at Woodlawn Cemetery, located north of the Norwood section of The Bronx, on Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021.

perform with a long list of performing arts organizations across the country, ranging from the Sarasota Opera (FL) to the Aspen Music Festival (CO), where she received a vocal fellowship.

"I was with a bunch of kids from Julliard and from Yale and from Rice; the top conservatories in the country," she said, in part. "I got to work with famous opera singers and conductors. I got to meet and work with Renée Fleming and she's probably the most famous opera singer alive."

No matter how far she travels from her South Bronx home, Collazo is often reminded of her unique position as a Latina opera singer. "[In Aspen] I was one of the students that was represented especially because I'm from The Bronx; that's very unique to what I do," she said.

Closer to home, in December 2021, Collazo performed as a soloist at Woodlawn Cemetery's Woolworth Chapel at a concert entitled, "Joy and Love for the Holidays."

She was accompanied at that performance by pianist, Pablo Zinger, who first became aware of Collazo when he saw her perform at Weill Recital Hall, a 268-seat venue, located within the Carnegie Hall building and nicknamed by Zinger as "the

small Carnegie Hall." Instantly, he knew he had seen a special talent in Collazo. "There were a bunch of young singers singing and she just stuck out," he remembers. "She sang beautifully."

From that performance, Zinger sought out Collazo through Bronx Arts Ensemble, an organization which brings music and related arts to Bronx schools and neighborhoods through live performances and innovative arts education, to perform together across the City. "It's been a few years where we have done a lot of stuff in The Bronx, in Brooklyn, [and] in Manhattan," he said.

Singers are in constant need of audition videos and Zinger has helped Collazo produce some of her video reels. "She often comes and does videos at my studio," he said. "It's been a pleasure to see her grow and start a professional career," he added.

Collazo also continues to give back to her community both as a private music teacher and at The Point Community Development Center by promoting their free music education program. An extract from the center's website reads that it is "dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx." It was at The Point where Collazo received some of her earliest music training as a child.

Through dedication to her craft and a lot of hard work, Collazo has developed an impressive resume of accomplishments during a still developing musical career. The thoughts of soon singing inside two of New York City's classic concert venues, venerated as they are, has certainly had an "uplifting" effect on her. "Yeah, I'm going to sing there, and I literally can't believe it!"

More information about Linda Collazo can be found on her website: <https://www.lindacollazo.com/>.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Rest in Peace Mrs. Ena Nemely

Brenda Caldwell-Paris, president of the 52nd Precinct Community Council, recently shared the council's sincere sorrow on the passing of someone they described as "an amazing woman, a loyal community activist, our dear friend, a truly devoted council member, Mrs. Ena Nemely." Caldwell-Paris said Nemely was called home to glory on Monday, March 6. "[We] have been so blessed to have had Ms. Ena for over 25+ years be in full active duty with us until she took ill and was placed in a nursing home," she said.

She continued, "As a community we all have, in many different ways, been touched by such a wonderful woman. We enjoyed her community events, especially the ones held in her community garden on Marion Avenue, where she maintained it for several years, growing vegetables and raising chickens. We so appreciated her always setting up our council meetings at her church, Fordham Methodist, and serving the best food." Caldwell-Paris offered the council's condolences and prayers to Nemely's family and friends and concluded, "Rest in Peace Ms. Ena... We Love You!!"



Photo courtesy of Brenda Caldwell-Paris.
(L TO R) Mrs. Ena Nemely and Brenda Caldwell-Paris, member and president respectively of the 52nd Precinct Community Council

New Charter School at 306 West 232nd Street

Following concerns over plans by the International Leadership Charter High School (ILCHS) to open a new, 7-story middle school at 306 West 232nd Street in Kingsbridge, one block away from its existing school site at 3060 Riverdale Avenue, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) said he sent a letter to the SUNY Charter School Institute, which oversees ILCHS as the trustee, asking how the school will safely operate and provide required amenities and programs to future students given the geospatial constraints of the proposed school site.

He also encouraged anyone who observes safety hazards at the new construction site or who has other construction-related complaints to report them to 311. The assemblyman added that he, State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) and City Council Member Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) have written to the NYC Department of Education to ensure public monies linked to the 3030 Riverdale Avenue charter school campus are being spent appropriately and responsibly, adding that campus was financed through the Build NYC Resource Corporation for a total of \$20,655,000.

He said he understands ILCHS already owns the Riverdale Avenue school campus, which serves grades 9-12 and has a maximum occupancy capacity, per NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), of 738 people. However, Dinowitz said ILCHS is planning to rent the site for the new middle school at 306 West 232nd Street from the developer. He said ILCHS has also reportedly requested a reduction in student population at its existing school site to 430 students for grades 6 & 9-12 in the 2024-2025 school year.

The assemblyman said ILCHS has said it expects 250-300 middle school students to attend the new campus. He said he and his colleagues have therefore requested answers to the following:

- 1) What are the parameters of the Build NYC Resource Corporation bonds?
- 2) What would be the fiscal impact to DOE to rent additional space at the proposed new middle school site at 306 West 232nd Street?
- 3) Are there any other examples of charter schools in New York City where a school both owns and rents property?

FOMP Selected for Preservation Support

The Historic Districts Council (HDC) recently announced its "Six to Celebrate," an annual listing of historic New York City neighborhoods which merit preservation attention in con-

junction with HDC's chosen local community partners. Among the six selected partners this year were Friends of Moshulu Parkland (FOMP). Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc., based in the South Bronx, was the only other Bronx group selected of the chosen six.

Six to Celebrate is New York's only citywide list of preservation priorities. Since the program's inception in 2011, HDC has assisted in leveraging over \$100,000 in private and public grants for community-driven projects. Neighborhoods selected also benefit from professionally designed websites, illustrated walking tour brochures, press attention, growing audiences and new contacts in the field.

FOMP executive director, Elizabeth Quaranta, said the group were humbled by the selection. "We are looking forward to the collaboration and to the results of this partnership," she said.

Water Bill Amnesty

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection has launched a temporary water bill amnesty program which will run through April 30, according to Assemblyman Jeffrey Di-

nowitz (A.D. 81). The program will forgive up to 100 percent of interest when customers pay either a portion or all of their outstanding water bills. Additionally, for those who already participate in New York State's Low Income Homeowner Water Assistance Program, DEP will forgive up to \$5,000 per customer of the remaining delinquent balances.

The DEP will offer three amnesty options for those with a seriously delinquent balance of \$1,000 or more. If 100 percent of the principal bill is paid, 100 percent of the interest will be forgiven. If 50 percent of the principal bill is paid, 75 percent of the interest will be forgiven, and if 25 percent of the principal bill is paid, 50 percent of the interest will be forgiven.

Additionally, customers who owe less than \$1,000 are still eligible to receive 100 percent of their interest forgiven if they pay their entire bill. Any customer who participates in the amnesty program but does not pay the entire balance will be required to enter into a payment agreement for the remaining balance.

For more information, to receive amnesty and confirm eligibility, visit the DEP's water amnesty website at: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/pay-my-bills/amnesty-program.page> or call 718-595-7000.

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Letters To The Editor

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

Sub-Metering No, Letters Yes

Since 1984, I've been a cooperator at the Amalgamated Housing Corporation. This co-op was founded in 1927 to provide affordable housing for working people. I lived in one apartment until 1992. Then I moved to my current apartment. The cooperative has a quarterly publication called "Community News." For decades, including under the former longtime and beloved education director, Doris Spencer, it included letters to the editor.

In the February/March issue, its first under the new education director, Ilyssa Gillman, no letters were published. I feel this is a loss since it denies cooperators a forum to express their views on different co-op issues. The unpublished letter I sent opposing sub-metering consists of the next four paragraphs.

The Amalgamated energy meeting held on Jan. 7 by longtime board member Ed Yaker was quite useful and informative. But there was one thing that was perturbing. Yaker said while it was not something the board would be dealing with for the time being, sub-metering would be considered in the future. This seems to be a vampire idea that won't die. One principal of our affordable co-op is that some expenses are shared to maintain affordability for those on tight budgets. I don't mind that others, out of necessity, might need to use more electricity than me. I also find the argument that everyone should pay their own electricity to get them to conserve energy questionable. Highlights from the Board of Directors meeting held Nov. 16, 2022, show that 431,560 kWh of electricity were used in October 2022. This is down from the three-year average of 528,373 kWh. The reason we are paying more for electricity is because the rate has increased from an average of 16.10 cents per kWh to 28.82 cents per kWh. At a board meeting a few years back, one cooperator who worked for Con Ed estimated that putting meters in every apartment would cost \$1 BILLION! With all the expenses this co-op has, that's the last thing we need. Yaker has an article, "On My Mind," in the current "Community News." Most of it is very reasonable, but when he complains that not enough people are running to join the Board, is it because he doesn't listen to others' ideas? I heard that complaint from a recently departed friend

who served on the board. If this is true, he might reconsider how he deals with other board members. Nobody, including Yaker, is always right and people will not want to serve if they feel their ideas will be dismissed without consideration.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Editor's Note: Norwood News reached out to Ed Yaker for comment. He replied, saying, "I am willing to listen and discuss with anyone who has ideas. I am not willing to respond to anonymous letters we get but if someone is willing to sit down and talk, I'll talk to people."

Walter Cronkite Missed

It was 42 years ago that legendary anchorman Walter Cronkite signed off for his final time on the CBS Evening News. Cronkite manned the anchor desk from April 16, 1962, until March 6, 1981. Watching Walter Cronkite on the evening news was a communal experience, in much the same way as listening to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fireside chats on the radio was for a previous generation.

When Mr. Cronkite declared that the Vietnam War was unwinnable, President Lyndon B. Johnson knew that he had lost the support of middle America. When Mr. Cronkite closed with "and that's the way it is," we knew everything that mattered in the world that day. His presence and voice of calm reason are sorely lacking today.

**Larry Penner,
Great Neck**

Churches' Stance on LGBTQ+ Rights

United Methodist Church lost 1,800 churches in a split over its LGBT stance per Christianity Today magazine. I would urge all houses of worship in The Bronx to wake up and realize there is a growing movement all over the world to reject the LGBTQ+ agenda. I was a lifelong attendee at the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Manhattan, and recently in The Bronx via the Throggs Neck and Woodlawn parades. I will now no longer attend any of them since they have moved away from the religious origin of the parade to include gay marchers. I will make the long trek instead out to Staten Island which proudly rejects the application each year of any gay attendees. Anyone want to carpool with me next year?

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Editor's Note: In 2013, Pope Francis made clear he wanted church leaders to prioritize outreach by the Catholic Church to the poor and vulnerable over fighting culture war issues like marriage equality. He has also encouraged the welcoming of LGBTQ+ community members into the Church.

In 2014, Archbishop of New York Timothy Dolan welcomed the move to allow LGBTQ+ groups to march under their own banner in the Manhattan St. Patrick's Day parade after years of exclusion and prayed "the parade would continue to be a source of unity for all."

Despite this, the organizing committee of the Staten Island St. Patrick's Day parade precludes LGBTQ+ groups from marching in the parade under an identifying LGBTQ+ banner on religious grounds. They say members of the LGBTQ+ community are welcome to march in the parade under the banner of other participating groups.

This year, New York City Mayor Eric Adams and some other elected officials joined members of the Staten Island Pride Center, GOAL, Irish and other LGBTQ+ activists and groups for

the annual, one-mile, rainbow march/run which takes place each year along the parade route, ahead of the actual parade, to protest these groups' exclusion from marching under their own banners in the parade.

"Taking a Chance on God," is a documentary by Irish American documentary maker and LGBTQ+ activist Brendan Fay. The film discusses the long history of LGBTQ+ activism within the Catholic Church. It was recently screened at Fordham University and is available to rent on vimeo.com for \$4.99. Fay was joined for a panel discussion after the screening by Professor Bryan Massingale, professor in Theology, at Fordham University.

Check out our latest story on the Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day parade in this edition.

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.

Theory 9 Honored for Work with "Rising Kings"

(continued from page 3)

in China, New Zealand, and Russia to name a few.

Asked for his reaction to the event, he said, "I'm super excited for my brother, Shakir Seagers, and Theory 9. He's the founder and to see the change that he's come and made, to see the kids come out and the families, it's awesome."



Photo by Síle Moloney

ISAIAH BARROW (GRAY shirt) gets a hug from a friend after he is presented, together with Shakir Seagers (red jacket), with a proclamation from District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez (green dress) at P.S. 8 in Bedford Park on March 2, 2023, for their work with nonprofit, Theory 9.



Photo by Síle Moloney

ISAIAH BARROW ADDRESSES the crowd after he is presented, together with Shakir Seagers, with a proclamation from District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez, at P.S. 8 in Bedford Park on March 2, 2023, for their work with nonprofit, Theory 9.



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CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

**Kingsbridge Heights Stabbing**

Police are looking for the assailant who robbed a man sitting in his car and stabbed another man who came to the victim's aid in Kingsbridge Heights. Police officials said the incident unfolded at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8, near the intersection of Heath Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road, when the suspect approached a 23-year-old male victim who was sitting in his car. They said the suspect displayed a gun and stole the man's iPhone and 2008 Acura car. Police said when a 24-year-old bystander attempted to assist the victim, the suspect stabbed him, causing minor injuries. Police said there were no arrests and are continuing to investigate.

**Fordham Heights: Two Sought in Armed Burglary**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the people seen in the accompanying photo who department officials say are sought in connection with a house robbery that occurred in Fordham Heights. Police said it was reported to them that on Monday, March 13, at around 6.48 a.m., a 32-year-old woman was inside her home, located near the vicinity of East 182nd Street and Grand Concourse, when two

unidentified people entered it.

"The male individual displayed a knife and demanded money from the victim," police said. "The unknown female then removed approximately \$300, a debit card, and other identification documents from the victim's purse. The individuals fled the location on foot in an unknown direction." Police said the victim wasn't physically hurt as a result of the incident.

**University Heights: Attempted Assault**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo who the department said is sought for questioning in connection to an attempted assault that occurred in University Heights. Police said that on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at approximately 10.22 p.m., three male

individuals approached a large group of people in front of 2065 Jerome Avenue, two displayed guns and fired several rounds, striking a 28-year-old man and a 20-year-old man.

"The two victims were taken to area hospitals and treated for gunshot wounds to the ankle," a police spokesperson said. Upon further investigation, police said the three male suspects were arrested and charged on Wednesday, Feb. 8. During the incident, police said an additional, unidentified male individual in the crowd displayed a gun and also fired rounds at the three shooters. "There were no reported injuries or property damage as a result of the return gunfire," police said. "The individual fled on a scooter westbound on Loring Place."

Wakefield: One Dead, One Injured in Shooting

A 24-year-old man has died, and a 42-year-old man has been hospitalized following a shooting in Wakefield. Police said that on Sunday, March 19, at around 11.48 p.m. officers responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot at a

deli located at 4702 White Plains Road. An NYPD spokesperson said, "Upon arrival, officers observed a 24-year-old male with a gunshot wound to the torso. EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to NYC Health & Hospitals/Jacobi, where he was pronounced deceased."

The spokesperson added, "A second victim from this incident, a 42-year-old male, with a gunshot wound to his right leg, was transported via private means to Montefiore Medical Center, where he is listed in stable condition." Police said there are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing. The deceased has since been identified as Dayquon Simmons, 24, of Westchester County.

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 @NYPD-Tips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Local Kids Face Off for Fun in Monthly Dance Battle Series

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Local kids from Olinville, Gun Hill Houses and beyond faced off in the third, free, monthly "Mind Your Beat" dance battle at Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center on Saturday, March 4. Dancers ages 9 to 14 shared the spotlight for a series of knockout, one-on-one dance battles throughout the evening, all with the aim of "releasing their inner beast," having some fun, and the chance to take home some coveted cash prizes.

There were even a few brave beginners who showed up to bust out their dance moves all in a safe, supportive, fun atmosphere, with each contestant hugging it out after each battle.

The monthly event is part of a dance battle series led by artist-in-residence and lead Hip Hop instructor, Joss [Jocelyn] Gutierrez, judges, Nate the Great and Dee Ross, and DJ Zappa on the turntable. Gutierrez, a pro dancer who has toured professionally along with her colleagues, teaches beginners to intermediate advanced level on Saturdays at Mind-Builders.

The energetic instructor, who pulls no punches but clearly has a great rapport with her students, said she wants to hone the next group of freestylers and street dancers who jump into the

spotlight when it's their time to shine. She said the classes aim to enhance dancers' musicality, precision, and confidence.

"I created 'Mind Your Beat' freestyle battles so that dancers ages 9-14 would have a safe space to showcase their individuality and get real-time feedback from industry professionals," she told *Norwood News*. She has been an instructor at Mind-Builders for 17 years and is also one-third owner of Kultiv8studios in Harlem.

Some of Gutierrez's former students from over the years returned on battle night to show their support and catch up with her. Past judges include Anthony "Klassic Kanec" Carr, who changed his flight out of New York to join the event, and District 12 City Council Member Kevin Riley. A "special guest judge" is planned for April.

For those who wish to come and support and watch from the sidelines, there is a \$5 entry fee, but the cost is free for participants, and all are welcome, though capacity is limited.

The judges later provided general feedback to the group which included listening to the music, telling a story, always dancing to the end of each battle but remembering to build up energy as the night progresses, as



Photo by Síle Moloney

DANCERS FACE OFF at the monthly "Mind Your Beat" dance battle at Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in Olinville on Saturday, March 4, 2023.

well as not relying too much on what they see on Tic Tok, which the judges said can kill individual creativity.

Gabriela Jascombe, 11, has been attending Mind-Builders for three years and was one of the finalists on the night. Asked what the best part of the night was, she said, "It's just about having a good time with your friends." We asked what advice she would give to somebody who may be interested in attending. She replied, "The first time I came, I was scared, but I still went full out. Just don't be too scared, and just push yourself. If you don't win, it's fine, because at least you had the courage to go

out there and dance because it's really a lot to build up that courage to do that."

A nonprofit established in 1978 by educator and scholar Madaha Kinsey-Lamb, it is located at 3415 Olinville Avenue in the Olinville section of The Bronx. Program alumni include Alimi Ballard, Gilbert Glenn Brown, Ayodele Casel, Charles Malik Whitfield, and Victoria Gabrielle Platt, among others.

Jeremiah, 12, was the overall winner on the night. We asked him what he thought gave him the edge. "Definitely, the classes and the adrenaline," he said before adding "also coffee."

We asked if he felt like he had

to up the tempo as the competition went on. "Yes, it was really fun to me. Actually, my tempo opened up basically on how every judge was giving critiques, and you're just taking that critique every single time," he said. "So, they would say [feedback] to another person but it also applies to yourself. So, it's like the mindset you have to have."

Asked if the music mattered to his performance or if he had a preference for a certain type of beat, he said, "I do, but at the end of the day, we're all here to battle and freestyle. In the real world, you cannot do that [choose the music]. So, I try to be open."

He concluded by thanking his proud grandmother, Dr. Lorraine Barnett, who accompanied him on the night, and encouraged others to participate. "Come to Mind-Builders! Take a class! It's so good, and it's also for free! Come down here, tell a friend of a friend of a friend - love you guys."

The next monthly dance battle will take place on April 1, and the following one on May 6, both from 6.45 p.m. to 8.15 p.m. at Mind-Builders. Register to battle at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1k6ZQxzKnsuLCO6kiRk4bZVSErzhTbADgtLpFvUbGas/viewform?edit_requested=true, for the chance to win \$100-\$200.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

District 15 City Councilman Oswald Feliz and Theonia Reets, chief of staff, and partners, will be hosting a **Women's Fellowship Brunch** to mark Women's History Month on Saturday, March 31, at 11 a.m. at Schiff Family Great Hall, on the grounds of the Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd, Bronx, NY 10460. Visit bit.ly/whm15th to register.

The Kingsbridge Historical Society and the Van Cortlandt House Museum, with funding from New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development, are getting ready to celebrate Pinkster, a major religious holiday that was celebrated in colonial New York but is little known today. Pinkster is the Dutch word for the Christian religious holiday of Pentecost that takes place 50 days after Easter. But for the enslaved and free people of African descent, for whom the celebration is most remembered, it began the Monday after and lasted three to five days.

The celebration was unique among New York's historical holidays as it incorporated rituals and

traditions that Africans brought with them to this continent. Learn about this lesser-known aspect of New York's early history at a special Zoom presentation with Lavada Nahon, interpreter of African American History for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, on March 23rd at 7 p.m. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com> by searching under "Getting to Know Pinkster, The Country's Oldest African American Celebration."

MUSIC

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts presents, direct from Cuba, the legendary champion of *Cha Cha Chá* and *Danzón*, **Orquesta Aragón**, with special guest, Pupi Legarreta, on Saturday, April 8, at 8 p.m. Aragón, who played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of Cuban music, internationally spearheaded the first wave of Cuban *Cha Cha Chá* and Mambo Mania that captivated American audiences with the characteristic sound of traditional "*Son Cubano*." Tickets can be purchased by calling (718) 960-8833 or online at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events>.

DANCE

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts presents "**Malevo: Argentine Dance**," on Monday, March 26, at 4 p.m. Created by director, choreographer, and dancer, Matías Jaime, this thrilling all-male

group specializes in Malambo, a traditional Argentine folk dance of great virility and dexterity, and seeks to take it beyond its limits with a modern, avant-garde, and transgressive approach, merging it with other dance styles like flamenco and urban percussion. . Tickets can be purchased by calling (718) 960-8833 or at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events>.

MOVEMENT

NY Parks Foundation's FREE spring Youth Track & Field program begins on April 8 in parks in The Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. Whether you want to hone skills or discover a new sport, the youth program for ages 6-17 is perfect for all levels looking to learn and have fun. Participants will practice proper technique, learn new skills, and develop healthy habits all while meeting new friends in their neighborhood park.

Meanwhile, for New Yorkers 60 years old and over, a Seniors Fitness program offers free twice weekly pickleball, tennis, yoga, and fitness walking classes across all five boroughs starting in April. Participants of all levels are welcome to come out, have fun, and socialize. Visit <https://cityparksfoundation.org/> for more information.

TO REPORT A STORY TO THE NORWOOD NEWS CALL US AT (929) 318 6595

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sanitation

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

Summer Youth Employment Program

Applications are ongoing for the Summer Youth Employment Program.

To apply, visit <https://application.nycsyep.com/>.

New York State Primary Elections June 27 Key Dates

Request your absentee ballot online or by mail by Monday, June 12. Register to vote via <https://nycvotes.turbovote.org/?r=votingnyc> by Saturday, June 17. Update your address if you have moved in order to vote on Primary Day by Saturday, June 17. Early voting takes place from Saturday, June 17, to Sunday, June 25. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to find your early voting site and hours. Request an absentee ballot in person by Monday, June 26. To find your borough Board of Elections office, visit <https://vote.nyc/page/contact-us>.

Polls are open on Primary Election Day, Tuesday, June 27, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> to find your Election Day poll site. Return your absentee ballot by mail (postmark required) or drop it off at a poll site by Tuesday, June 27.

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/>.

An affordable housing lottery help-line 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.

D Subway Line Track Maintenance Ongoing

Structural repairs will begin on the middle track of the D line this spring between Bedford Park Boulevard and Kingsbridge Road, resulting in weekday suspension of the express D train service from 4.45 a.m. on Monday, March 27, through 5 a.m. Friday, April 28. Customers are advised to allow for additional commute time.

During morning rush hours, all southbound D trains will operate locally between Bedford Park Boulevard and 145th Street. Northbound D trains will operate as usual, via local service. During evening rush hours, all northbound D trains will operate locally between 145th Street and Bedford Park Boulevard. Southbound D trains will operate as usual, via local service.

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_source=&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.

Free CUNY Application Fees

The City University of New York (CUNY) has waived the application fee for all New York City public high school seniors until April 15. The application fee is normally \$65. For more information, read the news release from CUNY here: <https://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2023/03/01/cuny-to-waive-application-fee-for-high-school-seniors-at-new-york-city-public-schools/>. This is in addition to the traditional application fee waivers which are made available on a need basis through high schools, as well as for veterans.

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.

Office & Truck Burn at Webster Parking Lot

By DAVID GREENE

A fire that destroyed a small outhouse office for a parking garage in Bedford Park as well as a truck parked next to it remains under investigation according to the FDNY, while one car owner alleges 40-mile-per-hour winds brought down a powerline in the area, sparking the fire.

Fire officials were called to 2 J's Parking Lot, located at



Photo by David Greene

CUSTOMERS SAY AN electrical fire, possibly caused by downed power lines, burned down the office and a parked truck at 2 J's Parking Lot on Webster Avenue in Bedford Park on Monday, March 13, 2023, seen here on Tuesday, March 14, 2023

2768 Webster Avenue, between East 198th Street and Oliver Place at 7.52 p.m. on Monday, March 13, for a reported "shed / trailer fire" in the back of the lot. The "all-hands" fire brought 12 fire units, comprising 60 firefighters to the scene, and the blaze was brought under control after 36 minutes, with no reported injuries, according to the FDNY.

The following day, a dozen car owners were seen surveying the damage and attempting to retrieve their cars, some standing in front of the business and some inside the lot.

A woman who seemed to be in charge at the lot was seen asking people to wait while she walked one couple to their vehicle. We attempted, unsuccessfully, to speak to her or arrange a later time to talk about the incident.

One man who was apparently trying to get the family car back handed us his cellphone as he tried to liaise with someone in charge. A frantic, unidentified woman on the other end of the line told us, "At the parking lot they had a fire there and burnt all my things."

Another woman alleges she had to wait nearly 3 hours to reclaim her property and was still waiting when we spoke to her. Asked about the cause of the fire, a male customer pointed to the power lines, and said, "They got loose. There was a lot of wind and they sparked, yeah. It was pretty windy last night."

On Monday, March 20, *Norwood News* contacted the owner of the damaged truck belonging to MJB Tek, Incorporated, a company that repairs H-VACs and other industrial machinery. Its owner, Melvin Bonilla, recalled, "That office that you see next to the truck, it caught on fire overnight." He added that the fire broke out after the vehicle was parked in the lot after 6.30 p.m. on March 13.

Bonilla continued, "So they just told me, 'I've got bad news for you.' I said, 'What happened?' They said the office caught on fire and my truck that was parked next to it."

Bonilla added, "What the fire didn't damage, when the fire department came to control the fire, all the water damaged a whole bunch of



Photo by David Greene

A SMALL SHED and a truck belonging to MJB Tek, Incorporated were destroyed after a fire broke out on Monday, March 13, 2023, at 2 J's Parking Lot on Webster Avenue in Bedford Park, seen here on Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

parts, a whole bunch of stuff inside the truck," he said, before adding, "At least no one was hurt." Asked if the owner had explained to him the cause of the fire, he replied, "Electrical."

Possibly explaining the angry faces seen at the yard the day after the fire, Bonilla said, "There were over 200 keys destroyed." He said this had left many drivers unable to drive away or turn off their car alarms, causing

a further dilemma. He added, "The only thing that didn't melt was the little key section."

Both the landline and cellphone numbers listed for 2 J's Parking Lot were not in service when *Norwood News* initially attempted to reach the owner by phone for comment. We tried both numbers again at a later point and the landline appeared to work so we left a message. The cellphone was still not working.



**“Rudy Vargas, owner of
Rudy’s Salon & Lounge”**



**Rudy's Salon & Lounge
382 Bedford Park Blvd Bronx, NY 10458
347-570-7965**

RUDY'S SALON & LOUNGE



Rudy's Salon & Lounge has been a pillar in the Bedford Park community for over 8 years, providing anyone who enters with services ranging from basic haircare to extensions. Owned by Rudy Vargas, her salon is the culmination of a lifetime of experience working with hair in both The Dominican Republic and The Bronx.

“It’s my life, I love what I do,” said Rudy. “With a simple change to someone’s hair, you can shift their entire mood for the better. It’s everything to me.”

Rudy's Salon & Lounge sets itself apart through its superb customer service.

Rudy has a passion for helping people look and feel their best in a judgment-free zone. Open 7 days a week, entering inside feels like walking into a vibrant second home.

Come in today and try a new hair color or style while receiving some of the best customer service the neighborhood has to offer. Rudy's Salon & Lounge, at 382 Bedford Park Boulevard, is ready and waiting to give you a fresh new look!

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Kingsbridge Armory Project Advances

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Representatives from New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) provided a recap to Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) residents on the latest discussions around the future use of the Kingsbridge Armory during the Bronx CB7 general board meeting held Feb. 22, following EDC's presentation to the board's land use committee on Feb. 14. It included an overview of the latest envisioning workshops, meetings held by the "Together for Kingsbridge" working group/steering committee, and other updates on the project.

"On Feb. 28, we'll be doing a focus group with faith-based institutions across the Bronx, and then we will be leading a community tour of the Brooklyn army terminal, which is an example down in Brooklyn, a space that's been re-developed to support manufacturing," an EDC representative said in part during the Feb. 22 board meeting. He added that the focus group would also be talking to Bronx Community Board 8 Economic Development Committee and meeting with some students from the Bronx Academy for Software Engineering.

As reported, the City-owned, 5-acre, cavernous, prior military facility is located in Kingsbridge Heights and was built in 1917. It is a protected historical building, and its history is long-documented. Over the years, it has been used for everything from film shoots to emergency storage, as well as for logistical purposes, such as during Hurricane Sandy and the COVID-19 pandemic. For the most part, however, it has been left



Photo by Sile Moloney

INSIDE THE MAIN section of the Kingsbridge Armory on Friday, March 17, 2023.

languishing, looming large over its underserved surrounding community in one of the City's lowest-income areas.

The aim of the project is to align the building's use with the values of its surrounding community, and local non-profit, Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, have been front and center in this regard.

According to the latest available district profile for Bronx Community District 7 (CD7), which encompasses the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park,

Fordham, University Heights, and Kingsbridge Heights, in which the armory is located, based on the 2010 census, there are 72,836 residents per square mile, compared to neighboring Bronx Community District 8 (CD8) to the northwest, where there are 30,803 per square mile.

Bronx Community District 8 (CD8) encompasses some or all of the neighborhoods of Riverdale, Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Village.

In terms of the rent burden relative to income, this is 53.8 percent in CD7, higher than the City and Bronx averages at 44.2 and 50.9 percent respectively. There's also the question of how the armory can serve the community in terms of job growth. Pre-pandemic unemployment in CD7 stood at 7.2 percent, compared to 5 percent in CD8. Meanwhile, 30.8 percent of residents in CD7 have incomes below the City poverty threshold, while that percentage is 18.6 percent in CD8.

Following various discussions held with the community to date, the Armory's priority uses have been broken down into six main categories. These include recreation & entertainment, community gathering & organizing, cultural engagement & attractions, local and small business use, training & education, and health & fitness.

The "Together for Kingsbridge / Juntos Para Kingsbridge" working group or steering committee comprises elected officials, including, among others, District 14 City Council Member Pierina Sanchez and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, members of Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, and EDC representatives. The group has been asking the public to submit their ideas of what they would like to see in place in the Armory for several months now, ever since the controversial Kingsbridge National Ice Center project was abandoned, as reported.

Some of the health & fitness ideas which emerged from the various workshops included an Olympic size swimming pool, and indoor track, a gym, a biking track, a spa, sauna, steam rooms, physical health services, mental health services, physical movement studios,

martial arts, yoga and meditation, and open-air spaces.

Under training and education, among others, some of the ideas generated to date include a hands-on tech training space, a multi-purpose, skill-sharing space, including tutoring and study rooms, lecture halls, collaboration spaces, open study spaces, computer labs, and studios with shared equipment.

In terms of demographics, an estimated 169,400 people (52.4 percent female) live in CD7, 44 percent of whom are foreign-born, which means language needs are a top priority. This compares to 33.3 percent of foreign-born residents in Bronx CD8.

Meanwhile, 25.9 percent of residents are under the age of 18 in CD7, higher than the citywide and Bronx averages of 20.9 and 25.1 respectively. In Bronx CD8, that figure is 20.6 percent. Also, just 9.6 percent of residents in CD7 are over the age of 65, compared to 19.7 percent in CD8.

When it comes to education, just 17 percent of residents aged 25 and over in CD7 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to Bronx CD8, where 40.9 percent of residents have done so.

On the crime front, there were 1,900 major felonies reported in CD7 in 2019, compared to 961 in adjacent CD8. Getting people into meaningful and fulfilling employment and having a community space in which residents can safely convene is therefore a priority.

On the question of using the armory as a hub for small businesses, some of the target business ideas and potential uses include trade & construction, sustainable food and agriculture, green economies, arts, multi-purpose spaces for events and large conventions, and presentation rooms.

Meanwhile, under recreation and entertainment, some of the ideas to date include the creation of food halls, a farmer's market, restaurants and rooftop cafes, a community kitchen, a Trader Joe's, a space for cooking classes, a dedicated space for games, and a movie theater.

Currently, there are an estimated 176 institutions devoted to education, child welfare and youth in CD7, compared to 191 in CD8. In terms of libraries and cultural programs, there are 15 in CD7, compared to 13 in CD8.

Under the community gathering and organizing category, ideas included having a space for community fairs and celebrations, adult daycare centers, a community and organizing space, childcare facilities, book clubs, talks on history and storytelling, having a safe space to hang, reading spaces, spaces for rooftop events, a space for occasions and celebrations, a lounge and breakroom and greenspaces.

Meanwhile, under cultural engagement, ideas included a museum telling the history of the armory and of the people of the Bronx, a history of Bronx arts, a museum store, video and interactive exhibits, guided tours of the armory, art spaces for local artists, a community mural, shows and event space, music, dance, art and craft studios, spaces for outdoor classes, concert venues, an amphitheater, an indoor and outdoor space for performing arts, spaces for live art, music and dance.

During the Bronx CB7 Feb. 22 meet-

(continued on page 19)

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300 Students Attend College Fair at Lehman

By MIRIAM QUIÑONES

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson hosted a Bronx College Fair at Lehman College on March 11. Held in the college's Apex Center, located at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, the event, which was held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., aimed to provide high school and college students, English language learners, and adult learners, the resources needed

to enroll and obtain a 2or 4-year college degree.

"Our Bronx institutions of higher learning provide a world-class education preparing and equipping new generations of global citizens with the skills necessary to succeed in their careers and in their lives," said Gibson of the event.

"Whether you are a high school student or ready to earn a master's degree,

we look forward to meeting and exploring ways we can assist in making it happen." Experts were available on the day to discuss financial aid, scholarships, degree programs, workforce development, mentorships, workshops, and more.

Deputy Bronx Borough President Janet Altigracia Peguero was on hand on the day to welcome the attendees with a warm smile. Around 300 people arrived

for the event on the day, many of whom were freshmen, while others were looking to transfer to other colleges.

Similar college fairs are being held at Manhattan College, Maritime College, Mercy College, Hostos Community College, Fordham University, Bronx Community College, Metropolitan College of New York, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the College of Mount St. Vincent.



All Photo by Miriam Quiñones

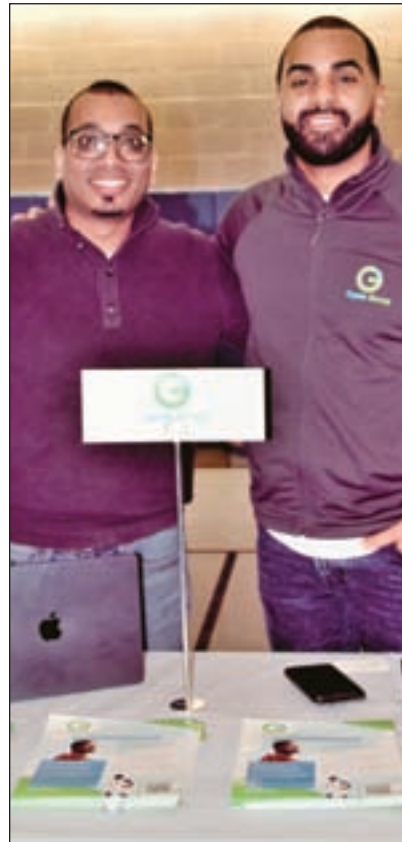
DEPUTY BRONX BOROUGH President Janet Peguero poses for a photo with two students at the Lehman College Fair at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, on March 11, 2023.



AROUND 300 PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED the Lehman College Fair at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, on March 11, 2023. Some were high school students, some freshmen, some were transferring to other colleges and others were English language and adult learners.



PARTICIPANTS ATTEND THE Lehman College Fair at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, on March 11, 2023.



REPRESENTATIVES FROM OYATE Group attend the Lehman College Fair at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, on March 11, 2023.



AN ATTENDEE AT the Lehman College Fair at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West in Bedford Park, on March 11, 2023, holds up a free water bottle she picked up at the fair.



Photo courtesy of NYC Department of Transportation

THE BX38 BUS stops on East Gun Hill Road at White Plains Road in the Olinville section of The Bronx.

DOT Updates CB7 on Gun Hill Road Bus Project

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

During the March Traffic and Transportation committee meeting of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) presented its final plan on proposed bus and pedestrian improvements to address congestion along Gun Hill Road before the plan's implementation in the coming months.

DOT said during the MTA Bronx Bus Network Redesign project, implemented in 2022, more than 50 outreach events were held, and it was clear the community wanted to see improvements to the Gun Hill Road bus service, named as one of ten key Bronx corridors for bus priority.

DOT officials said the goal of the Gun Hill Road project was to make bus service in the area faster and more reliable, reduce crashes, improve safety, and better organize the traffic flow for all parties. The plan dates back to 2019. Meanwhile, some of the challenges included heavy traffic, double parking, broken street grids, and the Bronx River Parkway bottleneck. Sarah Feller, senior project manager for DOT's bus priority team, said the department based the plan on feedback from the local community and DOT's analysis of traffic flows. "One thing we heard was that Gun Hill Road was a really busy bus route, but a really slow and unreliable one," she said.

According to DOT's data analysis, 40,000 bus passengers use the Gun Hill Road route daily, and it serves as a critical crosstown service with key

connections to the 2, 5, and D trains, many local bus routes, Montefiore Hospital, Co-Op City, and Bay Plaza.

According to DOT's analysis, only 65 percent of the BX28 and BX38 bus trips were completed within 5 minutes of their scheduled departure time and peak period trips would take 15-17 minutes longer than evening or overnight trips. DOT also reviewed five years of crash data for the period 2015-2019. "Five people every week were injured in crashes on Gun Hill Road," Feller said.

She continued, "Ultimately, we have a responsibility to make the streets safer for everybody who uses them, so safety improvements are a big part of this proposal." To address congestion, DOT plans to implement a center bus lane, bus boarding islands, metered parking, offset bus lanes, and truck-loading zones to help reduce double parking.

Feller said with congestion so prevalent in the area, the hope is that these changes will help improve the flow of both foot and vehicular traffic. The improvements include converting 31 full-time parking spaces along the route to accommodate bus boarding islands.

She said there will also be 4 new truck-loading zones, 3 new residential loading zones, and 49 newly metered parking spots to help ensure parking availability for drivers. Feller added that where some existing bus-stops were removed or spaced out, 12 new parking spots were created.

"We made sure there were alternate routes for folks to get to and from any block," Feller added. The DOT

will also be implementing a new signalized and marked, mid-block crossing to connect the main entrance of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore to the Greene Medical Arts Pavilion. This is expected to be implemented sometime in the winter of 2023.

"These are things that Montefiore Hospital specifically requested [us] that we do, and we think it's going to be really beneficial for us and for them, and for the neighborhood," said Feller.

Two southbound bus stops will also be consolidated into one at the near side of 210th Street and Bainbridge Avenue at some point in the spring 2023. As it currently stands, there are two bus stops just one block apart.

CB7 board members and members of the public were later given the opportunity to ask questions about the plan. Andrew Laiosa, a member of CB7's executive committee, expressed concerns over what he said was a lack of enforcement when it came to car owners who park in no-standing zones. He felt this could derail the plan.

Feller said DOT were aware this was an issue and took that into account when devising the plan. She said DOT will also monitor the plan to see what works and what doesn't.

Other members expressed concerns over school buses, parking, and smaller green time windows for pedestrians to cross the street. Edgar Ramos, the transportation chair, requested that traffic enforcement agents be available during peak hours to help students and patients safely

cross the street.

Later during the meeting, NYPD Sgt. Batz of Transit District 11 provided an overview of crime data for both the D and 4 train lines. "On both lines, it's pretty much the same problem," said Batz. "We've had 5 major crimes in the past 28-day period."

He said the crimes are related to robberies and passengers falling asleep and waking up on the train with property missing. Batz advised passengers to be aware of their surroundings, especially when sitting close to the train doors.

Megan Molina, a Bronx representative for the MTA, later provided an update on the installation of the long-awaited elevator at Moshulu Parkway train station.

Ramos said he thought it was part of a recently announced mobility project. Molina said it wasn't but that "it's still a priority." The station serves two Norwood hospitals, NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx and Montefiore Medical Center.

Later in the meeting, CB7 land use chair Erick Ascencio was nominated as co-chair of the Traffic and Transportation committee to assist Ramos with the running of the meetings, since the departure of Yajaira Arias from the role. He accepted the position.

The next Traffic and Transportation meeting is scheduled for April 6. DOT's Gun Hill Road presentation can be read at: <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/gun-hill-rd-cb11-mar2023.pdf>.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

James' heart failure reversal is one for the record books.

"I don't know that I ever would've survived if I wasn't at Montefiore Einstein."

— James Bradley

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See James' heart failure reversal story at montefiore.org/James



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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, March 23, at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Meeting ID is 876 5730 4607 and the passcode is 025302. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 28, at 6.30 p.m. via Zoom. The Meeting ID: 859 4776 2187 or to join by phone, call (646) 558-8656. 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** full board meeting will be held in April (date TBC). Contact BX08@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 March 9-22, 2023, in our page 15-16 story, "Black History Month Celebrated at Tracey Towers," there was a typo in both the body of the story and in the photo caption in reference to State Sen. Gustavo Rivera, who is the senator for S.D. 33, not S.D. 31, as mentioned.

In the same story, one of the Tracey Towers residents mentioned that his highlight from the event was meeting the Bronx borough president. In fact, the borough president did not attend the event and the resident meant to say the Bronx district attorney.

In the *Norwood News* edition, Nov. 3-16, 2022, published ahead of last year's general election, it was stated incorrectly on page 12 in an article entitled "Breaking Down Campaign Donations in A.D. 81" that Ivet Contreras, a spokesperson for Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), had donated \$405 to the campaign for Jessica Altagracia Woolford, then-candidate for A.D. 81, who had been endorsed by the congress member in that race. The donation of \$440, however, was, in fact, from an *Ivan* Contreras from Brooklyn. We apologize for these errors.



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Women's History Month Marked in The Bronx



Photo by Síle Moloney

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Vanessa Gibson poses for a photo with some of the honorees at a Women's History Month event held at Held at the Fem Hundra Hall, located at 2341 Hoffman Street in the Belmont section of The Bronx, on March 16, 2023.

(continued from page 12)

I am grateful to serve in this position alongside my Deputy Borough President Janet Peguero and many other incredible women leaders committed to uplifting the next generation of young girls and women."

This year's honorees included Denise J. Nunez, MD, chief executive officer of Divino Niño Pediatric PLLC, located in Fordham Manor, Pamela Damon, founder & director of Talitha Cumi Urban Etiquette & Leadership Academy, an organization which works to curb human trafficking and is based in Allderton, and Karen R. Johnson, vice president of Human Resources at St. Barnabas Health System in Belmont.

Other honorees included Christina Farrell, first deputy commissioner at NYC Emergency Management, Nitisha Moore, national director for development onboarding at the American Cancer Society, and Elise Otoo, a Mott Hall V School student, based in Soundview, who received the youth award.

Reacting to her award, Farrell said, "I really want to thank you for having me, having my family here today and my coworkers, the president, deputy president, and the whole team, and also congratulations to the other honorees." She went on to say that the nature of her work in emergency management had changed over her 20 years in the role.

"I'd like to say I was in high school [then but I was] a little past that," she joked, adding that both she and the department had really grown over that time, explaining that much more was understood now about PTSD, for example.

Drawing some further laughs, she said, "When I met the borough president back in the City Council when we used to testify against her in the public safety [domain], she was tough, but she was

fair! We were always friends!"

The Mistress of Ceremonies described Otoo as a 17-year-old senior at Mott Hall V in Soundview. "Elise has been an active part of her school community since she entered the school in sixth grade. She's shown to be a responsible, dedicated, and dependable student who strives to do her best. Elise was a diligent member of the school's Equity Team CTC, and as a student representative on the student council and leadership board. Elise is already on her way to becoming a CEO!"

She continued, "She has applied to the University of South Carolina, California, Boston University and Brown University and is currently awaiting the responses from the colleges. May you get accepted to all of them and you get to choose! She hopes to pursue an education in financing to acquire a deeper understanding of capital management expansion and development."

During her acceptance speech, Elise said, Hi Everyone! I would like to first thank my family, Score Foundation and Jocelyn Ramon from the CEC. Seeing everyone here is truly inspiring, and I just want to say thank you!"

We spoke with Otoo's mom after the ceremony who said she is a single mom who works 24 hours to put food on the table and makes sure her family are successful and have opportunity. She added that the family were originally from Ghana in West Africa. "We are so proud and blessed to be in this country, and she [Elise] has worked so hard. God Bless America!"

At the Bridgefield Civic League Women's History Month celebration at 3551 Laconia Avenue in Williamsbridge on Saturday, March 18, the honorees included Monique Ferguson Riley of Freedom Youth Family Justice Center, who recently expanded their work to Mount Vernon, Dr. Minette Francis Ha-

den, Bedford Park's Miriam Quiñones, Dr. Hadiza Osuji, and Cheryl McNear. District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley was in attendance for the occasion, among other community group leaders.

Quinones has volunteered with various local community groups like the American Albanian Open Hand Association [for 10 years], providing food and clothing to those in need. She is also *Norwood News'* freelance photographer. In addition, she has also worked as a volunteer photographer for other local nonprofits, helped Friends of Moshulu Parkland and the Summer Youth Program with gardening, and has worked to feed the homeless and organized coat and toy drives [for 20+ years], more recently with Bronx female-led, volunteer group, B.A.B.E.S.

The emcee noted, "Miriam began her mission work by providing food to the homeless underneath train stations

and at parks. She also distributed blankets and coats to individuals who were on park benches in the Norwood area of the Bronx during the cold seasons. It is Miriam's desire that one day everyone will be at peace, have a place to call home, and no one will have to sleep on the street or beg for food."

Quinones, who also works locally in Bedford Park as a school aide, was visibly emotional as she took the mic to address the crowd. Amid supportive applause, she said, "I'm not used to talking in front of people," she said in part. "I'm always behind the camera and not in front. I really appreciate this award."

She also took time to pay tribute to the president of Bridgefield Civic League, Cheryl Garland Johnson, who she described as "wonderful." She concluded by saying, "Thank you again! Wow! I'm actually speaking in front of a room of people!"



Photo by Síle Moloney

CHERYL GARLAND JOHNSON, president of the Bridgefield Civic League (left) joins honoree, Cheryl McNear, District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley and another attendee at the Bridgefield Civic League Women's History Month celebration on March 18, 2023 at 3551 Laconia Avenue in Williamsbridge.

Kingsbridge Armory Project Advances

(continued from page 14)

ing, Parks' Chair Barbara Stronczner asked if more than one developer was envisaged for the project given the number of different ideas that were circulating on the use of the armory, and given it was reported by government officials that the previous developer fell through due to financial reasons, though the developer in question, KNIC Development, disputes this assertion, as reported, and has challenged this in court.

The EDC representative replied, saying, in part, "We want to maintain flexibility and creativity, so we don't want to limit it to just one developer. However, we are open to one developer coming in with a great idea that can be financed, but just based on these conversations, we're exploring different options on which we can RFP [Request for Proposal] the site."

He added, "So, whether it's one developer, multiple developers, those answers will become more clear as we reach the end of this envisioning process and really have a cohesive vision and set of goals, and then determining the best way, the best approach, to achieving those goals, whether it's trying to attract one developer or being able to bring in multiple developers and basically condo out the armory."

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