



NORWOOD NEWS

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PROTESTORS RALLY FOR MAN SHOT BY POLICE



Screenshot by Sile Moloney

PROTESTORS RALLY OUTSIDE the 52nd Precinct on Webster Avenue in Norwood on Friday, April 7, 2023, to protest the police shooting of Raul de la Cruz on March 26, 2023, at Raul's father's home on the Grand Concourse in Kingsbridge Heights, after his father called for help when Raul, armed with a knife, was experiencing a mental health episode.

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

A group of about 20 protesters, including family members of an emotionally disturbed man who was shot by police in Kingsbridge Heights last

month, held a rally outside the 52nd Precinct in Norwood on Friday, April 7, calling for "Justice for Raul" and the release of the names of the two officers involved in the shooting.

As reported, Raul de la Cruz, 43, was shot by police when officers from the 52nd Precinct responded to a call regarding an emotionally disturbed person armed with a knife at 2685

Grand Concourse on Sunday, March 26, at around 10.04 a.m.

Outside the precinct on April 7, holding a bullhorn, the leader of the group, Adrian, addressed
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Rally Held Opposing New Kingsbridge Charter School

By SILE MOLONEY

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), District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz, and State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) joined a group of local residents and members of the Construction and General Building Laborers union on Saturday, April 15, for a rally to oppose the opening on the grounds the area was ill-equipped to handle the new school.

The assemblyman had previously sent a letter to the SUNY Charter School Institute, which oversees ILCHS as the trustee, asking how the school would safely operate and provide required amenities and programs to future students given what he said were the geo-spatial constraints of the proposed school site.

The assemblyman added that he, Jackson, and the councilman had also written to the NYC Department of Education (DOE) to ensure public monies linked to the 3030 Riverdale Avenue charter school campus were being spent appropriately and responsibly, adding that the campus was financed through the Build NYC Resource Corporation for a total of \$20,655,000.

He said he understood ILCHS already owned 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. Dinowitz said ILCHS was, however, planning to rent the site for the new middle school at 306 West 232nd Street from the developer. He said ILCHS 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 had said it had expected 250-300 middle school students to attend the new campus, and that he and his colleagues had therefore asked what were the parameters of the Build NYC Resource Corporation bonds,

what would be the fiscal impact to DOE to rent additional space at the proposed new middle school site at 306 West 232nd Street, and were there any other examples of charter schools in New York City where a school both owned and rented property.

Speaking at the event, the councilman asked how the school was going to manage the project, adding that as of the date of the rally the school had refused to meet with the community to discuss how it would actually be run. "How are they going to keep our students safe? How are they going to be good neighbors to us, communicate and be part of the neighborhood?" he asked.

The councilman added that the school was apparently "not above"



Photo courtesy of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

ASSEMBLYMAN JEFFREY DINOWITZ (A.D. 81), District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz, State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) and protestors rally on Saturday, April 15, at 306 West 232nd Street in Kingsbridge to oppose the opening of a new charter school at the site.

reaching out to the community when it came to advertising the facility, but couldn't spend a "few bucks on a phone call, zero dollars on an email or a couple of cents on a stamp" to discuss the community's concerns at a meeting. "We've asked, you've asked, and they've said, 'no,'" he said.

The council continued, "That is not what makes good neighbors." He said with all the concerns around the construction, the impact of traffic, the number of people in the neighborhood, the school had a responsibility to talk with the community. "If this is any indication of what they are going to do in the years going forward," the councilman said. Jackson then added, "We don't want 'em! We don't want neighbors that are not going to be neighbors." The assemblyman, meanwhile, was then seen giving a thumbs down amid applause.

Norwood News reached out by phone for comment to the International Leadership Charter High School for comment. A person initially replied by phone, saying, "No comment." Later, a lengthy written statement from Dr. Elaine Ruiz Lopez, CEO of the school, was provided, touting the school's various successes and in which she said it was unfortunate that the expansion of the middle school, "though fully supported by community parents and families, was sparking such vehement attacks from a small group of detractors."

"With this record of success, we felt that the natural progression was to expand our instructional model to 6th to 8th grades," Ruiz Lopez said. "More than two thirds of the students that we serve are residents of the Kingsbridge/Riverdale neighborhoods. We have had enthusiastic support of our Parents Advisory Council and the approval of the SUNY Charter Schools Institute."

The statement continued, "It is unfortunate that Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz has resorted to what appears to be political theatre by taking sides with the anti-charter school group of

individuals who have launched a 'Stop the Charter School Build Campaign'." He has turned his back on his own constituents – hundreds of students and families of color who vote!"

Ruiz Lopez said the school had addressed each of the "concerns and false narratives" one by one. "Our construction site has been vandalized simultaneously to strategy meetings to intentionally derail our timeline for construction led by the NY Teachers Coop at Tibbets Towers on West 232nd Street," she said. "This NIMBY group is opposing the right to an education for students of color, while a few of these detractors have taken it upon themselves to cut security wires, glue locks and prevent our crews from completing their work."

Ruiz Lopez continued, "We are providing a high-quality education to disenfranchised communities of color to help them thrive and become contributors to a greater society. Our families are low-income or working-class from LatinX, African American, African, and Caribbean communities looking for opportunities for their children. We cannot afford to allow "nimbyism" to deny an education to middle school students who live in the Kingsbridge community and deserve this opportunity to receive a quality education."

The statement was accompanied by a copy of an explanatory letter about the project dated March 17, addressed to community members and neighbors.

We also asked both DOB and DOE for comment on the assemblyman's earlier points, including the responsible use of funding. The latter referred us to NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), saying, "This is a charter school operating in private space as they are allowed to do by state law. I believe the first question involved the EDC, not us." When we contacted EDC, we were informed that Build NYC was not involved with the school project. We asked the assemblyman for a comment further to EDC's feedback, and will also follow up should we hear from DOB.

Brick Tossed Through Window during Passover

By DAVID GREENE

The NYPD's Hate Crimes Unit is currently investigating an incident where a slab of concrete was tossed through the living room window of a home during the Jewish holiday of Passover. The targeted window had an Israeli flag.

Police officials say the incident occurred at 2:45 p.m. on Friday, April 7, at 2121 Matthews Avenue, between Lydig

Avenue and Pelham Parkway. One police official said, "There is a complaint report on file for criminal mischief within the confines of the 49th Precinct."

The official continued, "The report states an unknown suspect intentionally damaged a victim's window by throwing a rock. A sign in the window read, 'Wherever we stand, we stand with Israel.' The official added that there have been no arrests and the case is now being investigated as a hate crime.

The victim Rochelle Shapiro, who's lived in the 6-story building since it opened in 1964, told *Norwood News*, "I was getting ready for Shabbat. It was the second day of Passover... and I look up and boom!" The large piece of concrete narrowly missed her and smashed the center window in her living room.

Shapiro added that if a large plant was not in the way, "it would have hit me straight on." Not very hopeful that the suspect will be apprehended, she said, "They [the police] do not give their all anymore because everyone is against the cops. The frigging politicians turned away from the cops. There is no protection for anybody."

Shapiro continued, "Because I was standing there, that could be a coincidence, because he could have done it because he sees the Israeli flag. They're in Ramadan. There's a terrible war going on over there right now." She added, "The

way the country is, the law is now in favor of the perpetrators and not the victims."

Asked if she planned to remove her flag, Shapiro replied, "Absolutely not! I'm going to put up a sign saying you can't kill us, us meaning all Jews."



Photo by David Greene

THE LARGE CONCRETE slab that was hurled through a window on Matthews Avenue during Passover in this photo taken on Sunday, April 11, 2023.



Photo by David Greene

POLICE BELIEVE THE window was targeted with the concrete slab because of an Israeli flag that was still in the window on Sunday, April 11, 2023.



Photo by David Greene

A LARGE PIECE of concrete was tossed through a window with a Jewish flag along Matthews Avenue on Friday, April 7 as seen here in this photo taken on Sunday, April 11, 2023.



Department of Transportation

Naveen Rodriguez, Commissioner

DIVISION OF BRIDGES INVITATION FOR BIDS

Marine When and Where Structural
Repairs and Other Miscellaneous
Work in Five Boroughs
Contract No. HBCY106
NYCPIN: 84123MBR555
EPIN: 84123B0002

84123B0002-84123MBR555 – Marine When and Where Structural Repairs and Other Miscellaneous Work in Five Boroughs: This Competitive Sealed Bid is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this Bid must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/moc/systems/about-go-to-passport.page> and click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort". Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system.

To locate the Competitive Sealed Bid, insert the EPIN, 84123B0002, into the Keyword search field. In order to respond to the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

A pre-bid conference via ZOOM is scheduled for 04/27/23 at 10:00 am. Those wishing to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link.

The deadline for the submission of questions is 05/03/23 by 4:00 pm.

The bid due date submission via PASSPort is 05/16/23 by 11:00 am.

This procurement is subject to MWBE participation goals. The MBE goal is 2% and WBE goal is 2% for this project.

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed by email, under the subject line "Marine When and Where Structural Repairs and Other Miscellaneous Work" to the email address of the Authorized Agency Contact, Naveen Kumar, at naveen@dot.nyc.gov

Eric Adams, Mayor
Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their opinions on the best way for City officials to respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis who are armed.



"I personally feel that instead of just talking to them, I feel like [the police] should just tase them, like detain them first. I feel like you can't talk to a person with mental illness because you need to put them in a mental illness facility or a hospital... If you have mental illness, you shouldn't be put in jail because they won't learn anything, and they're supposed to be given medicine."

Kayliena Anó,
Manhattan
Photo by David Greene



"In my opinion, the best solution is the same way everybody should know CPR, everybody should know how to deal with something like this in some form or fashion. If you choose to be a police officer, your job is to protect and serve, right? So, you should know how to restrain somebody unforcefully. You should know some type of martial arts or something or have some type of tranquilizer training with EMS... There needs to be multiple steps in place in order to deal with something like that. A lot of people going through something like that often just need somebody to talk to."

James Crosland,
Brooklyn
Photo by David Greene



"Police need to control their anger most of the time, you know? Most of the time, I know they're doing their job but when you see a gun, it could be fake or real. They don't always have to shoot somebody in the head. They could shoot him in the leg or in the arm or tase him or talk to him. Pretty soon stop and frisk is going to come back. It's dangerous now. You've got to understand. You think this is a movie? Robots can't do everything. A robot can probably do it better than shooting someone in the head. Instead of shooting someone in the head, they should try and shoot him in the leg."

Jesus "Pork Chop" Chuito,
Parkchester
Photo by David Greene



"Stop waiting for the City to respond and for the community to come out and respond, and I'll clarify.. A lot of our issues here in The Bronx really stem from people minding their own business, that whole mantra 'snitches get stitches.' Even though I understand this, it's not what's helping the problem. In most of these cases, they're impressionable young adults that are angry, upset, and it is mental illness but it's a different kind of mental illness."

Gene DeFrancis,
Allerton
Photo courtesy of Gene DeFrancis
(former candidate for Assembly District 80)



"Most important is a combined effort between police officers trained to handle these kinds of situations and EMS. During any breakdown or mental meltdown, we need people trained for this. Every case is different and cannot be handled as a crime. Few people even remember key details after such an incident. The City must find a way to train all employees so they know when they are in this kind of situation. They must know how to react and not escalate the situation."

Sheila Sanchez,
Olinville
Photo courtesy of Sheila Sanchez

Pinkster Festival!

Saturday, May 6, 2023
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Van Cortlandt House Museum Lawn

- Live Music with **Chief Baba Neil Clarke, Master Percussionist**
- Story of Pinkster with the **Pinkster Players**
- African Games with **Lavada Nahon, NY Cultural Historian & Interpreter**
- Stories with **April Armstrong, Master Storyteller**
- Tours with **Ashley Hart Adams, Teaching Artist & Actress**
- Chat with **Carla & Keyes, Interpreters**
- Community Art Project with **Tijay Mohamed, Artist**

PLUS: Food from **Voilà Afrique** and crafts from **African Masidi & Co** for sale!

*For me, Pinkster is about finding joy in the slave years...
joy in survival, joy in connection, joy in culture.*

~ Lavada Nahon



WHAT IS PINKSTER?

Once a major holiday in colonial New York, Pinkster is the Dutch name for the Christian event of Pentecost. For the enslaved and free people of African descent, Pinkster proved to be a unique New York historical holiday that incorporated African rituals and traditions.



“Up Life” Easter Celebration Held in the Oval

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Local nonprofit, Up Life, held an Easter celebration in the Williamsbridge Oval on Sunday, April 9, complete with a DJ, balloons, games, dancing, and more for local families to enjoy. Kids were seen coloring “Up Life” on the stone-work in bright colors, and running around with bunny ears, blowing bubbles, and flying balloons on what was a sunny Easter Sunday.

Up Life founder, Robert Salkey, said of the event, “This is my community so I wanted to give back, and make sure I get everybody to learn how to network with each other, how to build each other, learn and have fun.”

Salkey later explained, “I came out of prison, and I just wanted to give back and change my whole aspect of life and show the world that coming from the ghetto, coming from a place where we not used to so much, we just want to give back, and show them that it doesn’t take much to give back.”

He continued, “I just basically wanted to give the world a better outlook of life and show them that we could come together and be like a family, and giving back is not that hard, because somebody in the household might have something, two of things and another household doesn’t have anything. So, if we could take one thing from a house and give it to another person and just share with people equally, then we could become a better place.”

Asked what more could be done to support the local community, Salkey said, “We need support from the officials. We need support from the government. We need support. I’m a non-funded nonprofit. I’ve been rocking seven years and I do need help and I want to help. I love the world, and I love my people.”

José Cornejo went to school with Salkey at P.S. 94 in Norwood. “So, I’m pretty much his family,” he said. “I live around the neighborhood. My family owns a few daycares (KinderCare). My mother, she used to have a daycare since early 2000s. So, we support each other in everything we do. You just have to make a call, and that’s pretty much it from the neighborhood.”

Asked what he felt was needed most in the community, Cornejo said, “More for the kids, anything for the kids. I see a lot of stuff that didn’t happen when we were younger. Now, I’m a father of three and another one on the way, and I love my neighborhood but any changes to better them in our neighborhood, I’d be grateful...starting with the schools, education, everything. A lot of people don’t have the privilege of going away [to summer camps] but we still here.”

Asked what supports were most needed for the formerly incarcerated on release, Salkey said, “They have to be strong. Statistics say two thirds go back to prison, and I’m the one third that will never go back, and I’m gonna show my community that we’ve come together and be great.”



Photo by Síle Moloney

UP LIFE FOUNDER, Robert Salkey, poses for a photo with local kids and friends at an Easter celebration in the Williamsbridge Oval on Sunday, April 9, 2023.



Photo by Síle Moloney

ABOVE LOCAL KIDS DANCE at an Easter celebration in the Williamsbridge Oval on Sunday, April 9, 2023, organized by Up Life nonprofit.



Photo by Síle Moloney

JOSE CORNEJO POSES for a photo with his kids at an Easter celebration in the Williamsbridge Oval on Sunday, April 9, 2023, hosted by Up Life nonprofit.

Three Contractors Charged in First Bronx Manslaughter & Criminally Negligent Homicide Case

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Three building contractors were indicted on Wednesday, April 12, in the first Bronx case to bring charges of manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide for a construction fatality which took place at 94 East 208th Street in Norwood in 2019.

The victim, a father and 46-year-old Ecuadorian immigrant worker, Segundo Manuel Huerta Mayancela, was crushed by 1,000 pounds of debris in what was described as an egregiously dangerous building site, a joint investigation by NYC Department of Investigation (DOI) and the Bronx District Attorney's office found. Builders also allegedly falsified credentials/permits and flouted safety laws, according to the investigation.

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and New York City DOI commissioner, Jocelyn E. Strauber, made the announcement during a press conference on April 12. Three contractors were charged in the death of Huerta Mayancela and a fourth man was charged with fraud in relation to the incident, which allegedly resulted from "blatant disregard for building safety codes and worker's protections," Clark said.

As pictures of the victim and the ac-



Photo by Sile Moloney

CITY OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, that three building contractors have been charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide in the death of Segundo Manuel Huerta Mayancela during a construction accident at 94 East 208th Street in Norwood on Aug. 27, 2019.

cident scene were displayed behind her, Clark said, "The horrendous death of Segundo Manuel Huerta Mayancela, buried under cinderblocks and metal sheets, was entirely preventable. The construction site at 94 East 208th Street

was a deathtrap waiting to happen."

She continued, "An unqualified company allegedly used fraudulent credentials, ignored oversight requirements and building code, and built a dangerously unstable structure. Workers are not expendable. Along with our partners at the Department of Investigation, we will hold anyone accountable for putting workers at risk in an already hazardous profession."

Clark added, "The death of an Ecuadorian immigrant at a construction site led to the passage of Carlos' Law, which creates greater accountability for tragic and avoidable injury to workers at New York construction sites and increases the penalties for criminal corporate liability for the death or serious physical injury of an employee, a felony or misdemeanor, by a fine of up to \$500,000."

She said the dangerous conditions presented in the case were precisely why Carlos' Law was enacted, but added that the latest [Norwood] case predated the statute which only became law in 2022. "In the future, any construction-related fatalities in The Bronx will be met with this important tool [Carlos' Law]," Clark said. The legislation is named after Carlos Moncayo, a 22-year-old construction worker who tragically died at a New York City construction site in 2015.

For her part, Strauber said, "The City's buildings codes are written to support and advance safety on construction sites. As charged, these defendants failed to follow the law and to carry out their most basic responsibilities, including to show up in person to ensure safety standards were being met."

She added in part, "These failures resulted in dangerous conditions that could have been prevented, and ultimately led to the death of one worker, and injuries to five others. As these charges show, there are grave consequences for those who would treat the City's construction safety regulations as merely optional."

Department of Buildings (DOB) acting commissioner Kazimir Vilenchik P.E. said, "New York City has among the strongest construction safety regulations anywhere in the country. The defendants' stunning disregard of even the most basic of these regulations in this case is reprehensible."

He added in part, "The Department of Buildings is committed to bringing accountability to the construction industry, and our work in support of this indictment sends a strong message that negligence on the worksite will not be tolerated."

Clark identified the defendants as Augustine Adesanmi, 67, owner of Favored Design and Construction, who engaged in the actual construction; Akhlak Choudhary, 54, owner of Pioneer General Construction, a general contractor for the project; Abazi Okoro, 66, owner of Linzi Construction and a construction superintendent at site; and Fatos Mustafaj, 64.

Adesanmi is charged with second-degree manslaughter, and he, Choudhary and Okoro are charged with criminally negligent homicide; Adesanmi and Mustafaj are charged with second-degree grand larceny and Choudhary is charged with four counts of offering a false instrument for filing.

According to the Bronx district attorney's office, defendants, Adesanmi, Okoro and Mustafaj were arraigned on April 11, before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Guy Mitchell and were put on supervised release. They are due back on June 8. Choudhary has not yet been arrested, Clark said, later adding, "We're looking for him. He just hasn't been apprehended yet."

According to the investigation, in early 2019, Atin Batra entered into a formal agreement to pay \$1.2 million to Favored Design to construct a 4-story, eight-unit residential building on a vacant lot he purchased at 94 E.208th Street. Adesanmi and Mustafaj allegedly claimed that Favored Design was qualified to engage in new construction and would file necessary permits and proof of insurance.

Clark said Favored Design did not have qualifications under the New York City Building Code to engage in construction of a new building, so they allegedly enlisted Choudhary, a quali-

(continued on page 13)

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Search for 17-Year-Old Missing Girl

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating a 17-year-old girl reported missing from Fordham Manor. Police said Silvia Morales was last seen on Friday, April 14, at around 3 p.m. inside her home at 2609 Briggs Avenue. She is described as female, has a medium complexion, is around 5 feet, 9 inches in height, weighs 140 pounds, has brown eyes, and black hair.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

SILVIA MORALES

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

NY's First Black Chief Judge Confirmed

Rowan D. Wilson was confirmed on April 18 as New York's first Black chief judge of the Court of Appeals, the New York Law Journal reported. The associate judge was nominated by Gov. Kathy Hochul amid opposition from some, including sexual assault survivors. Wilson was ultimately approved on a 40-19 vote in the NYS Senate, the Journal reported. The vote was seen as an historic one, but some GOP opponents were critical of a March 16 decision Wilson authored regarding the overturning of a jury's rape conviction *People v. Regan*, because of the lack of a speedy trial, the Journal reported. Wilson succeeds Judge Janet DiFiore who stepped down last year.



Screenshot courtesy of New York State Senate via YouTube
JUDGE ROWAN WILSON
April 18, 2023

On Dec. 22, 2022, Hochul had nominated Hector LaSalle as chief judge of the same court, but that nomination had been met with some opposition by progressives, including reproductive rights groups. As reported by City & State, LaSalle's

nomination, if successful, would have made him the first Latino chief judge of the court, but ultimately it was rejected by the senate, primarily due to past decisions on topics like abortion, labor, and the rights of criminal defendants.

Feliz Drafts Bills to Curb Fake Paper Plates

District 15 City Council Member Oswald Feliz has introduced two bills to tackle fraudulent paper plates on motor vehicles. Feliz said fraudulent plates have created new public safety challenges: so-called ghost cars. "Like ghost guns, ghost cars are difficult to trace, and are being used not only to violate traffic laws with impunity, but also to

commit minor crimes," he said. "The plates are encouraging reckless behavior in our communities, and we must crack down on them."

The councilman added, "The use of these plates exploded during pandemic-related DMV closures, which led to an increase in temporary paper plates, giving cover to individuals with fraudulent plates." Feliz said online marketplaces like Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace must improve efforts to detect and remove listings related to fake plates, and the federal government must also create standards so that temporary plates produced in every state have enhanced security features that helps prevent their easy fabrication.

St. Philip Neri School Honors First Responders

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

Students at St. Philip Neri School in Bedford Park want first responders to know how much their service means to them. On Jan. 31, more than 50 first responders, including police officers, firefighters, and EMTs were invited to attend a special mass at St. Philip Neri Church, located right next to the school. The first responders ate breakfast with students in the parish hall, and later went on a tour of the school.

"It was fun," said sixth grader Katherine Mundo, who had a very personal reason to be appreciative of those assigned with protecting the community. "My mom's a cop, and I view her from a very high point," said 11-year-old Katherine.

The event started with the pomp and ceremony of the NYPD Pipes and Drums Band, filling the church's main hall with the distinctive sound of bagpipes as they entered and marched to the front.

This was followed by the department's Color Guard and the invited guests then saw a procession of officers and other first responders take their seats. The multi-faith audience later heard a sermon, prayers, and some of the faithful participated in the Communion service.

Some students were tasked with reading passages from the Scriptures at the podium. Fifth-grader Kaily Rosado, 10, was one of those privileged to read aloud. Poised and composed, she read her assigned passage to the audience of several hundred seated in the main stage of the church.

Later, she admitted to feeling tense before her turn came to speak. "I was really nervous," Kaily said. She then shared a tip with **Norwood News** on how to overcome nerves when speaking in public. "I was nervous, but I just thought about my family, my friends, and my principal," she



Photo by José A. Giralt

A GROUP OF students from St. Philip Neri School join priests from the church and NYPD officers from the the Bronx for a group photo after a special mass honoring all first responders in the borough on Jan. 31, 2023. The mass was followed with a breakfast organized by the school in the parish hall of St. Philip Neri Church in Bedford Park.

said.

Kaily's mother is a nurse. We asked her how the various first responders showed their appreciation to students for the mass and breakfast. She had a simple answer. "They smile and shake my hand," she said.

The attendees included officers from all 12 precincts in The Bronx, according to Community Affairs Officer Stephen Echevarria at the 52nd Precinct. "Every Bronx precinct was represented, including Patrol Borough Bronx and the chief of the Bronx Philip Rivera was here as well."

Meanwhile, Katherine's mother, Tanya Marcial, was in attendance and not only felt the appreciation for her work as a police officer from her daughter, but from other students as well. "[This event] helps the children understand what it means to be a first responder," said Marcial. "The way the children receive us, it's welcoming and very warm."

One interaction that Marcial witnessed was particularly

poignant. "I saw two little boys speaking to some officers and they were very interested in the equipment," she said. "They were able to touch the handcuffs and after they finished speaking with the officers, I overheard them speaking with each other."

She said, she heard them say, "Wow, they felt so real, so heavy." Marcial added, "Hopefully that sparks some kind of interest going forward [and] maybe going forward, in the future, they will decide to join the department."

Echevarria acknowledges that it is not always possible to get this close to the youngest members of the community and hear them out. He had some words of appreciation for events like the mass and breakfast.

"It's an amazing thing that St. Philip Neri School does for our officers," he said. "Not only here for the 52nd Precinct but the whole borough of The Bronx. It really shows how much they care about the police and community relations... We're grateful to be here today."

Old School Fun at Annual Easter Egg Hunts

By DAVID GREENE

Over 1,000 Bronx kids and their parents gathered in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood for the annual Spring Easter Egg Hunt, organized by NYC Parks' Department on Saturday, April 8.

The event comprised all types of games, arts & crafts, and fun activities for children of all ages, including traditional Easter egg hunts and "old school" potato sack races. To keep things fair and safe, both activities catered to kids of different age groups. The longest lines were for the biggest attraction, "Justy the Bunny."

Sharon and Olga of Financial Literacy & Family Engagement were seen manning a table on the day surrounded by children. They said the stand was sponsored by nonprofit, Strive Higher, which is based at the Oval Recreation Center. Sharon explained, "Right now, the kids are planting plant pods with seeds." The youngsters would later take home beet, peas, or spinach mustard plants.

Morris Park resident Janet had her hands full as she told *Norwood News*, "Let me see... I'm with four kids... no five! Five children...yes! Four of them are over here, and one is in the Easter egg hunt." Asked how the pota-



Photo by David Greene

PARENTS WATCH AS children race to collect as many Easter eggs as they can at the Williamsbridge Oval park annual Easter celebration in Norwood on Saturday, April 8, 2023.

to-sack race went down, she replied, "That's where they were about to go now, little by little."

She added that the children were aiming to hit every activity. Of her visit to this year's Oval Easter celebration, Janet said, "This is my first time. I honestly think it's awesome to provide the children with some fun!"

Heather Guerino of Crusaders for Children's Rights, one of many event sponsors on the day and who provided the popular bunny, as well as free goodies, said after the event, "There were a lot of kids, a lot of parents. I was shocked that so many parents came out!"

Teaming up with the Parks' department for the second year in a row, Guerino said, "It was nice, although there was a line, you know? Everybody wanted to take pictures with Justy the Bunny." She added, "It was very nice, and the parents were very patient; they waited on line for their turn. I wished more elected officials had participated."

According to Guerino, both State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D.33), who sponsored two magic shows at the event, and Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (A.D. 81) stopped by the event on the day. Guerino's husband, Sirio, co-



Photo by Sile Moloney

KIDS JUMP AND laugh as they participate in a traditional potato sack race as part of the annual Easter celebration in the Williamsbridge Oval Park in Norwood on Saturday, April 8, 2023.

founder of Guerinos Against Graffiti*, another event sponsor, ended up providing security for Justy the Bunny.

Sirio explained, "Some of the older guys were trying to be wise guys." He added that a few older teens thought it would be funny to remove the bunny's head or pull his zipper down the back. Guerino noted, "I had to put them in their place."

According to Sarah Bishow-Semevolos, manager of the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, over 1,000 people turned out for the event, and over 720 kids participated in the various Easter egg hunts.

Other sponsors of the event included the Jerome Gun



Photo by David Greene

DEXTER GARDINER AND City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez team up to host the annual Easter egg hunt in St. James Park on Jerome Avenue on Saturday, April 8, 2023.

Hill Business Improvement District (BID), the Glad Tidings Assembly of God Church, the NYPD's 52nd Precinct, Bronx Community Board 7, Strive Higher, and Friends of Mosholu Parkland.

Meanwhile, on the same day, just south of Kingsbridge Heights in Fordham Manor, several hundred children and their parents gathered in St. James Park along Jerome Avenue and East 192nd Street for the 6th Annual Easter Egg Hunt. The event was organized by The Gardiner Foundation and held inside the park and for the second year in a row, the foundation was assisted by the Office of City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14).

A representative for the foundation told *Norwood*

News, "We have a whole bunch of goodies for the kids, all different kinds of candy and we put out three golden eggs out there." The children who located the golden eggs would later be given a \$50 gift certificate donated by Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.)

Explaining that The Gardiner Foundation no longer has a corporate sponsor, its founder, Dexter Gardiner, told *Norwood News*, "This year, it's just us, The Gardiner Foundation. We don't have a sponsor. We're looking for sponsors right now, but we're out there getting donations."

Gardiner launched the foundation shortly after six members of his family were killed in a horrific crash on the Bronx River Parkway as they were traveling to a basketball tournament at St. James Park. Since the tragedy, the foundation has held an annual basketball tournament for local children in August, and a book-bag and school supply giveaway before children go back to school in September. The foundation also provides scholarships to high school students going to college.

Mentioning the volunteers, including members of BRAG, Gardiner said, "We have a lot of volunteers from different groups helping us." This year, the founder attended the event with two of his grandchildren, ages 7 and 9. When asked how his grandkids were enjoying the event, he beamed, "They're loving it!"

Meanwhile, Sanchez brought her own goodies, holding a raffle where she handed winners free tickets to the Bronx Zoo and the New York Aquarium. "Ali" from New Jersey brought her two children to this year's event. Asked if Arianna and Heaven, both 6, participated in the egg hunt, she replied, "We came late... She couldn't do it but she wanted to!"

Ali's daughter and her cousin were still given some Easter candy. Visiting the Easter event at St. James Park for the first time, Ali said, "I think this is something amazing! They should do this every year for the kids. Look how they're gathered together, and they do these things. It's amazing! I love it!"

Sanchez later said of The Gardiner Foundation, "It's just this incredible community institution and they do a lot of work and organize a lot of community events, and they're especially special to me and to the community." She continued in reference to Gardiner, "He's dedicated his life and his career and all that he does to give back to the community where he was born and raised, where I was born and raised, here in Kingsbridge."

The Gardiner Foundation's basketball tournament will be held from August 19 – 20 at St. James Park. For more information on the tournament or the foundation, visit The Gardiner Foundation website at: <https://the-gardinerfoundation.org/>.



Photo by Sile Moloney

KIDS ENJOY ARTS & crafts and face painting at the annual Easter celebration held in the Williamsbridge Oval Park on Saturday, April 8, 2023.



Letters To The Editor

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

Shut-Off Not a Gas

I am one of the cooperators living in the Amalgamated Housing Cooperative, [located in Van Cortlandt Village]. Luckily for me, I am not living in one of the 827 apartments [whose occupants] are threatened with having their stove/oven gas shut off as of July 1. Based on NYC Local Law 152, an inspection done in December of 2022 determined that gas line repairs were needed in six buildings and [in] sections of two others. Due to financial constraints, the Amalgamated cannot afford to do the repairs by this deadline.

In his "On My Mind" column in the February/March edition of Community News, Amalgamated Board member Ed Yaker wrote of the problems the Amalgamated has had with the agency that regulates it, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The chief problem appears to be that for the purpose of making repairs, the Amalgamated wanted to borrow money and did not receive DHCR approval.

This was in 2020, when interest rates were historically low. The reason for this rejection was purely bureaucratic. The Integrated Physical Needs Assessment was not submitted in the format DHCR required. Currently, cooperators (myself included) have been contacting elected officials asking them to help resolve this issue. I hope that our elected

officials and the DHCR will put in the effort to find a reasonable solution so that all cooperators will continue to be able to cook in their apartments.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Construction Safety

Construction season is now under way. As the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) continues to build and enhance our transportation infrastructure throughout NYC and across the State in 2023, I want to urge the public to help us keep our workers safe. In The Bronx, we are advancing a number of large projects that are bringing tremendous benefits to the public, such as the \$1.7 billion Hunts Point Access Improvement Project.

[This is] an unprecedented State investment that is enhancing infrastructure and connectivity in the South Bronx, while also improving the quality of life for residents. Huge projects like this take hundreds and hundreds of workers to get the job done. These are husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, children, sisters, and brothers. All their family members want them to return home safely after work each night, and we at NYSDOT do, too! The public has a critical role to play in work zone safety. Slow down and drive carefully in work zones. Remember, our workers' lives are depending upon you!

**Craig Ruyle, P.E.
Regional Director
NYS Department of Transportation**

Editor's Note: We don't usually accept op-eds or letters to the editor from lobbyists, elected or government officials but as this topic is in the interest of public safety, we made an exception.

Earth Day

Let us celebrate Earth Day April 22, 2023, all year long. Recycle newspapers, magazines, glass, plastics, old medicines, paints and cleaning materials. Leave your car at home. For local trips in the neighborhood, walk or ride a bike. For longer travels, consider many public transportation alternatives already available. Use MTA, NYC Transit subway or bus, Metro North Rail Road, Westchester Bee Line Bus, or NYC Economic Development Corporation private ferry.

They use less fuel and move far more people than cars. Employers offer transit checks to help subsidize a portion of the costs. Utilize your investments and reap the benefits. You'll be supporting a cleaner environment and be less stressed. Many employers allow employees to telecommute and work from home full or part time. Others use alternative work schedules, which help staff avoid rush hour gridlock. This saves travel time and can improve mileage per gallon. Join a car or van pool to share costs of commuting.

Use a hand-powered lawn mower instead of a gasoline or electric one. Rake your leaves instead of using gasoline powered leaf blowers. The amount of pollution created by gasoline-powered lawn mowers or leaf blowers will surprise you. A cleaner environment starts

with everyone.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Courage RC

The last remaining gay bar in The Bronx, Identity, in Woodlawn of all places, has closed, and it represents a growing trend with these type of establishments all across the City. Please allow me to share with the Norwood News readers an avenue to follow to give direction to a friend or family member who may be questioning same sex attraction. That path is a wonderful, friendly, and welcoming organization called Couragerc.org. There, counselors and sponsors can help you navigate yourself into a happy and chaste lifestyle in accordance with God's plan.

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Editor's Note: Destination Tomorrow provides a range of services to the Bronx LGBTQ+ community. Visit www.destinationtomorrow.org for more information.

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.

Norwood: Murder at Woodlawn Station

By SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

A 45-year-old man died following a fatal shooting (murder) in Norwood police said. The victim was later named by police as Devon Millington from the Wakefield section of The Bronx, who had previously served reduced time in prison on murder and drug-related charges.

Police said the incident occurred on Saturday April 15, at 5.47 a.m. in the vicinity of Woodlawn station, the last stop on the 4 subway line in The Bronx. The previous morning, a 52-year-old man had been robbed and assaulted at Mosholu Parkway subway station, one stop before Woodlawn.

A police spokesperson said officers from the 52nd Precinct responded to a 911 call regarding a male who had been shot in front of 3700 Jerome Avenue. "Upon arrival, police discovered a 45-year-old male with a gunshot wound to the head," the NYPD spokesperson said. "The victim was transported

to Montefiore Medical Center where he was pronounced deceased," the spokesperson added.

There are no arrests, and the investigation is ongoing. One resident said he was told by other people in the neighborhood the shooting happened on the elevated train platform of Woodlawn station and the victim was seen exiting the station by the stairs in blood-soaked clothes.

Norwood News followed up with the NYPD on Saturday to corroborate the veracity of the resident's statement. An NYPD spokesperson responded saying, "I can't confirm it at this time. We haven't had any... we're still waiting for updates, and I don't have that detail."

Officers and detectives were seen investigating and interviewing an MTA employee on the Woodlawn subway platform, part of which was cordoned off, on Saturday morning/afternoon.

In response to a subsequent inquiry by *Norwood News*, the

NYPD confirmed on Sunday that Millington had two prior arrests, one for murder in the 47th Precinct, which covers the Bronx neighborhoods of Woodlawn, Wakefield, Williamsbridge, Baychester, Edenwald, Olinville, Fishbay, and Woodlawn Cemetery, in October 2000, and another for burglary, also in the 47th Precinct, in 1991.

As first reported by the NY Daily News, and according to records from NYS Department of Corrections, Millington was discharged on parole on July 1, 2019, having been convicted for second-degree murder (a Class A1 felony) and for promoting prison contraband in the first degree (a Class D felony), and having served time in prison since April 18, 2002. Millington's aggregate *minimum* sentence had been 18 years, 0 months, and 0 days, and his aggregate *maximum* sentence had been life in prison.

According to the report by the NY Daily News, "Millington was just 23 when he and two buddies went drinking and got high at the former Bill and Bob's Sports Bar in

Wakefield, the Bronx, on July 20, 2000. About 2 a.m., the trio decided to rob bartender Everard "Erik" Gerrald and fatally shot him, according to court filings."

Norwood News spoke to some other employees in the area and asked if they felt safe generally in light of the shooting. One said, "That's normal here." Another added, "That's what New York has become. It's a reality. The more that we say, the more that we ask for, the more that we tell, the more we point, anything.. it's not going to change what happens. We're not a priority. It doesn't matter." We asked if by "we," he meant The Bronx generally. He replied, "the community."

This latest incident follows a police-involved shooting on Thursday, April 13, outside the KFC premises in Kingsbridge, also on the elevated subway tracks of the West 231st Street subway station.

Anyone with information in regard to this incident is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782).

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



Bedford Park: Man Sought in Robbery of Elderly Person

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo who they said is sought in connection with the robbery of an elderly person which took place in Bedford Park. Police said that on Saturday, April 8, at around 1.10 a.m., in the vicinity of East 199th Street and Briggs Avenue, a 68-year-old male victim was entering his residential building when an unidentified man approached him from behind and pushed him to the ground.

A police spokesperson said, "The victim fell on his face and the individual then forcibly removed the victim's wallet and approximately \$200." The spokesperson added, "The male fled on foot, heading westbound on Bedford Park Boulevard. The victim was seen by EMS and refused medical services."

14-Year-Old Leads Police on Wild Highway Chase

An unidentified 14-year-old from The Bronx is facing multiple charges after he allegedly led police on a wild chase from Kingsbridge Heights to the Concourse section via the Major Deegan Expressway, according to the NYPD. Officers attempted to stop the vehicle at about 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11, at West Kingsbridge Road and University Avenue, police said, adding that the 2011 Kia sedan struck two parked vehicles and burst through a gate. The teen was later taken into custody, police said, at a parking garage at 610 Exterior Street, just south of Concourse. The teen faces a slew of charges, including grand larceny, reckless endangerment, criminal mischief and resisting arrest.



Three Sought for Armed Robbery at Mosholu Parkway Subway Station

Police said that on Friday, April 14, at around 4.55 a.m., a 52-year-old male victim was walking up the staircase into the Mosholu Parkway subway station, located at Jerome Avenue and Mosholu Parkway South and serving the 4 line, when three unidentified individuals who were unknown to him approached him.

They said the first placed the victim into a headlock and displayed a box cutter. The second and third then kicked the victim in the ribs, and stole the victim's property, including his wallet, book bag, and \$350. "The

individuals then fled into 3115 Grand Concourse," a police spokesperson said. "The victim suffered minor injuries and was treated at an area hospital."

Police said the first suspect is described as a male teen with a dark complexion, is around 5 feet, 7 inches tall, and weighs around 150 pounds. He was last seen wearing a blue shirt, a gray, hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans, and white sneakers.

They said the second suspect is also described as a male teen with a light complexion who is around 5 feet, 7 inches tall and weighs 150 pounds. He was last seen wearing a black and white, hooded sweatshirt, black pants, and tan sneakers.

They added that the third suspect is also described as a male teen with a light complexion, is approximately 5 feet, 5 inches tall, and weighs 130 pounds. He was last seen wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt, black pants, and black shoes. The accompanying photo was obtained from the vicinity of the incident location, police said.



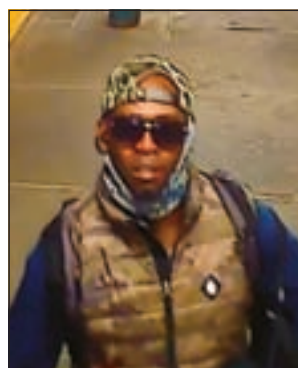
University Heights: Two Teens Hospitalized following Early Morning Shooting

Two teenagers have been hospitalized after they were shot in University Heights, police said. The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo who, they said, are sought for questioning in connection to the incident.

Police said that on Friday, April 14, at around 2 a.m. in the vicinity of 1950 Andrews Avenue, three unknown people fired several gunshots from within a gray Hyundai Sonata, striking the two 18-year-old male victims. "One victim sustained a gunshot wound to the back. The other victim sustained a gunshot wound to the right calf," a police spokesperson said. The suspects fled the scene in the vehicle, heading westbound on 179th Street, police said. "The victims were transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition," the spokesperson added.

Fordham Heights: Man Punched & Robbed on Subway

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo who they said is sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in transit on the border of Fordham Heights and University Heights. Police said that on Thursday, April 13, at around 4.45 a.m., a 33-year-old male victim was sitting on the southbound 4 train which was heading toward the 183rd Street Sta-



tion when an unidentified man, unknown to the victim, approached him and punched him multiple times in the face.

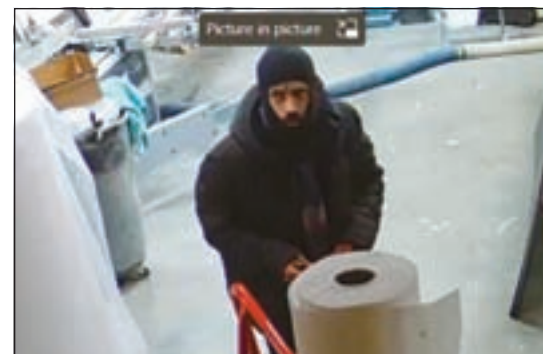
A police spokesperson said the suspect then stole the victim's backpack and exited the train at the 183rd Street station, heading to parts unknown. "The victim was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition," the spokesperson added. Police said the suspect is described as male, has a medium build, and is around 30 to 40 years old.



University Heights: Two Sought in Attempted Assault

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo who the department said are sought in connection with an attempted assault that occurred on the southern border of University Heights. Police said that on Monday, April 10, at approximately 2.05 p.m., two unidentified male individuals on a blue moped approached two unidentified male individuals who were walking in the vicinity of Andrews Avenue South and West Burnside Avenue.

Police said one of the two got off the moped, displayed a gun, and shot multiple rounds in the direction of another person running across the street. They added, "The individual across the street then displays a firearm and discharges rounds at the individuals next to the moped. As a result of the gunfire, a discharged round entered the apartment of a male victim in a nearby residential building." Police said there were no reported physical injuries as a result of the incident.



Kingsbridge Heights: Man Sought for House Burglary

The NYPD is asking for the public's assistance locating the person seen in the accompanying photo who is sought in connection to a burglary that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Wednesday, April 5, at around 7 p.m., an unidentified person approached a home located in the vicinity of Webb Avenue and Eames Place. They said a person jumped over a fence surrounding the property and entered the building through an unlocked basement door.



BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

CRIME FILE

"Once inside, the individual removed approximately \$200 in cash, car keys, and approximately \$1,175 in tools," a police spokesperson said. Police said the home was occupied by a 35-year-old woman at the time of the break-in, adding that she discovered the burglar inside the property. They said he fled the location in an unknown direction upon being discovered, and added that the woman did not sustain any physical injuries as a result of the incident.

Olinville: Teen Arrested in Fatal Shooting of Second Teen

Police said they have made an arrest in the case of the recent fatal shooting of a 17-year-old male youth in Olinville. The shooting took place on Monday, April 10, at around 10.05 p.m., police said. Officers responded to a 911 call regarding a male who had been shot inside Burke Avenue subway station, located on White Plains Road, serving the 5 and the 2 lines, they said.

"Upon arrival, police observed two 17-year-old males with gunshot wounds," police said. The first victim had multiple gunshot wounds to his head, arm and shoulder, while the second had a gunshot wound to his hip, they said. "EMS transported both males to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi, where Victim #1 was pronounced deceased and Victim #2 is listed in stable condition," police said.

The deceased was later identified as Kymani Woods, 17, of Holland Avenue in Williamsbridge. On April 16, police said pursuant to an ongoing investigation, an

unidentified 17-year-old male was arrested on Friday, April 14. The Bronx District Attorney later named him as Owen Darien, 17, from The Bronx. He's been charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a firearm, police said. The investigation remains ongoing, police said. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Olinville: Man 38 Stabbed at Subway Station amid Dispute

The NYPD is asking the public's help identifying and locating the person seen in the accompanying photo in connection with an assault that occurred in Olinville at Gun Hill Road subway station, serving the 2 train. Police said that on Sunday, March 26, at around 11.39 a.m., a 38-year-old man was on a moving southbound 2 train when an unidentified person approached him and engaged him in a verbal dispute.

As the dispute escalated, police said both the victim and suspect exited the train at the East Gun Hill Road and White Plains Road train station. They said while on the southbound platform, the suspect displayed a knife and proceeded to stab the victim in the lower back. "The individual fled from the station to parts unknown," a police spokesperson said. "EMS responded and transported the aided victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi in stable condition." The suspect is described as male and has a medium to dark complexion.



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/>, on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

The Bronx Night Market, a vibrant community event that celebrates the values of inclusivity, diversity, and local entrepreneurship comes back for its 6th season, starting Saturday, April 29. The long-awaited Bronx Night Market returns to Fordham Plaza, bringing together over 50 diverse vendors, live performances, and a cultural extravaganza. Visitors are invited to experience the market magic on the last Saturday of each month from 1 pm to 7 p.m. until October. With a diverse array of international cuisine, live music, and captivating performances, visitors will immerse themselves in the bustling energy of the market.

April is Jazz Heritage Month! Woodlawn Cemetery is known for its Jazz Corner where many jazz giants are at rest. Join **Woodlawn's Jazz Heritage Trolley Tour** on Saturday, April 29, at 2 p.m. to view the unique monuments and honor the legacies of jazz greats Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Illinois Jacquet, and Lionel Hampton, among other notables. Visit <https://www.woodlawn.org/conservancy/tours-events/> for more information. On Saturday, May 6, at 2 p.m. Dyckman Farmhouse Museum Alliance and partners will host a talk on **Slavery in Greater New York** at the Hispanic Society Museum and Library, 613 W 155th St, New York, NY 10032. Visit <https://dyckmanfarmhouse.org/> for more information.

MUSIC

NYC Parks will host a **Silent Disco** will be held on Wednesday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. This event is free and open to the public and headphones will be

provided.

Adults are invited to join a **Mother's Day Karaoke event** by NYC Parks with music, singing and dancing on Monday, May 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. This event is free and open to the public.

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, The Bronx, is proud to present **The Doo Wop Project**, the dynamic, rave-reviewed celebration of a beloved music genre, on Sunday, April 23, at 6 p.m. Starring the five engaging, charismatic Broadway stars from smash hits like *Jersey Boys* and *Motown: The Musical*, this exciting new show features fresh renditions of classic Doo Wop hits as well as "doo-wopified" versions of contemporary hits. Members of The Doo Wop Project are Dominic Nolfi, Charl Brown, Dwayne Cooper, Russel Fischer, John Michael Dias and Musical Director Santino Paladino. Visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/doo-wop> or call (718) 960 8833 for more information.

POETRY

The Bronx County Historical Society will be hosting **Spring 2023 Poetry Seminars** at Poe Cottage, located in Poe Park at 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10458. Track 1 sessions will be taught by award-winning Bronx poet, Mariposa Fernández, partially in Spanish. Track 2 sessions will be taught by the Thursday Morning Poets, an award-winning New York City-wide group of writers. Seminars are free and open to all ages. Both seminars will culminate in a Poetry Slam on the porch of the Cottage, located at Poe Park, on Saturday, June 24, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Individuals are welcome to participate in as many seminar sessions as they wish across both tracks. Given the limited space at Poe Cottage, participants should register beforehand for the sessions they intend to attend. Individuals who have not registered are welcome to sessions, as long as space is available, on a first come basis.

DANCE

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd W, Bronx, NY 10468, in association with OZ Productions, International Concerts and Love Productions,

presents the world-class, **State Ballet of Georgia**, on Sunday, April 16, at 6 p.m. Led by Nina Ananiashvili, a native of Georgia and a former Bolshoi prima ballerina, the State Ballet Of Georgia will present their triple bill "*Mostly B*": *Serenade*, with choreography by George Balanchine and music by P. I. Tchaikovsky; *Concerto Barocco*, with choreography by George Balanchine, and music by J. S. Bach; and *Sagalobeli*, with choreography by Yuri Possokhov, to Georgian folk music. Tickets can be purchased by calling (718) 960-8833 or online at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events>.

MOVEMENT

A Family Day including family games, sports, obstacle courses, cotton candy and family photos will be held by NYC Parks and District 11 Councilman Eric Dinowitz on Thursday, May 11, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. This event is free and open to the public.

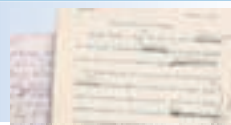
On Tuesday, May 23 at 5 p.m., Montefiore Rehab Specialists are hosting a "**Walk with a Doc**" event at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, 10467, where specialists from the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine will gather with local residents and walk for one hour. They will cover around 2-3 miles, and participants are encouraged to go at their own pace. New research shows that walking 8,000 steps once or twice a week may help you live longer.

Other benefits include lower risk of heart disease and improved brain health. Walk with a Doc is a free exercise event that has been taking place since 2015. It allows the community to come together to exercise, connect and practice wellness, along with medical professionals. Montefiore specialists also participate in the physical activity and answer health and wellness questions from the group. More information is available at <https://walkwithadoc.org/join-a-walk/locations/bronx-new-york/>.

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/> or call (212) 360-1399 for more information.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



Lost Dog

A reward of \$100 is being offered for information leading to the safe return of Prince, a lost dog, per posters seen around the Reservoir Oval East. The pup is described as 2 years old and ran away while walking with his owner. He was last seen in the Grand Concourse area. He is described as very friendly and probably scared. Call (475) 477-7312 or (203) 889-7784 or email Jonn58935@gmail.com with any information.



Prince, the dog is lost

Friendly Voices Program for Seniors

If you are an older New Yorker feeling lonely or isolated, NYC Ageing can connect you with a friendly volunteer to talk with over the phone or video chat. Call (212)-Ageing-NYC (212) 244 -6469 and ask about the Friendly Voices Program.

Abortion Access in NYC

Abortion remains safe and legal in New York City according to the City's health department. On April 7, a federal judge in Texas ruled to suspend FDA approval of the medication abortion drug mifepristone, potentially threatening nationwide access to the drug. The judge stayed the ruling for 7 days to allow the federal government time to appeal the decision.

Medication abortion continues to be available at the City's Sexual Health Clinics and NYC Health + Hospitals locations. Should mifepristone become unavailable, City officials said they will continue to make medication abortion accessible to all in NYC by shifting to a misoprostol-only treatment regime. If you are looking for help finding an abortion in New York City, call the Abortion Access Hub on 1-877-NYC—AHUB or 1-877-692-2482 or visit nyc.gov/abortion for more information.

Safe Disposal Day

Get rid of harmful household items e.g. solvents, automotives, flammables or electronics safely on Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Orchard Beach Parking Lot with NYC Department of Sanitation. Cars should follow Park Drive to the end. If you cannot attend, please call 311 or visit nyc.gov/safedisposal for more information about upcoming events.

Salary Negotiation Help

New York State Department of Labor can help with applications, interviews, job offers and salary negotiation. If you need advice, visit <https://dol.ny.gov/salary-negotiation-guide>.

Earth Day Clean-Up & Giveaway

An Earth Day Clean-Up organized by NYC Small Business Services with the Jerome Gun Hill BID and Friends of Mosholu Parkland will be held on Saturday, April 22, from noon to 3 p.m. at Mosholu Parkway South under the 4 train at Jerome Garden Plaza. There will also be a giveaway, arts & crafts, a raffle, and more.

No Questions Asked Gun Buyback

New York Attorney General Letitia James and the NYPD are hosting a no questions asked gun buyback on Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Family Life Academy, 14 West 170th Street, Bronx. No ID is needed. You bring an assault rifle or ghost gun, you get \$500, you bring a handgun, you get \$500 for the first and \$150 thereafter, you bring a rifle or shotgun, you get \$75, or you bring a non-working replica, antique, homemade or 3D printed gun, you get \$25.

Guns must be UNLOADED and placed in plastic bag, paper bag or box. There is no limit to the number of guns accepted. Licensed gun dealers, and active or retired law enforcement are not eligible. Payment is subject to approval and is made via prepaid gift cards. For more information, call (518) 776-2000 or email intergovernmentalaffairs@ag.ny.gov.

DSA Branch Social

The Bronx/Upper Manhattan DSA Organizing Committee is hosting a branch social on Saturday April 22, from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Van Cortlandt Park. Meet for a branch social at the Memorial Grove in the park by entering at Broadway and 246th Street. The Memorial Grove is between the public restrooms, the volleyball courts, and Van Cortlandt House Museum. The branch will buy some snacks and drinks, but feel free to bring anything you want to share! Also be sure to bring something to sit on, weather-appropriate clothing, and protection from the sun! To RSVP, for any questions, or if you want to help out, email bronx.uptown@socialists.nyc. Kids, friends and partners are all welcome. If it looks like it will rain, the group will send out a confirmation email by 12 noon that the event will move to Sunday, April 23, same location, same time.

Charity Yard Sale

Bedford Park Congregational Church, located at 309 East 201st St., Bronx, NY 10458, will be holding a yard sale on Saturday, May 20, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a basement clearance sale of chairs, tables and other items collected over the church's 100+ years.

Bronx BP Job Fair

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and NYS Department of Labor is hosting a Jobs Fair on April 27, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bronx Borough Hall (Rotunda) 851 Grand Concourse, Bronx. Admission is free.

Monroe College Government Job Fair

An NYC government job fair will be held at Monroe College, Mintz auditorium, 2501 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468 on Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be on the spot interviews for city jobs including inspectors, case managers, clerical associates and more.

Mother's Day Celebration

District 78 Assemblyman George Alvarez will host a Mother's Day Celebration at Caridad Kingsbridge, 135 West Kingsbridge Road, on Sunday, May 7, at 3 p.m. RSVP to munozm@nyassembly.gov.

My Brother's Keeper Health Fair

Bronx Borough President & partners will host a My Brother's Keeper Health Fair on Thursday, May 4, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Bronx Studio School for Writers & Arts (gymnasium) at 928 Simpson Street, Bronx, NY 10459. Admission is free and there will be health screenings and healthy food demos, nutrition assessment and more. Email Agaud@bronxbp.nyc.gov for more information.

Kingsbridge Armory Survey

The working group behind the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory, Together for Kingsbridge, is requesting the public to provide their input on what they would like to see in place in the armory by completing a survey which can be found here: <https://kingsbridgetogether.com/community-engagement-survey>, and which is available in both English and Spanish. Tours of the armory, located at 29 West Kingsbridge Road, are also available on April 21 and 22 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sign up online at edc.nyc/kingsbridge-community-tours.

Con Ed Works

Con Edison is carrying out electric upgrade work in Bronx Community District 7 at East 203rd Street between Valentine Avenue and Mosholu Parkway South from March 28 to April 26, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Summer Youth Employment Program Deadline Extended

In late March, the City government announced that the application deadline for the Summer Youth Employment Program has been extended to an unspecified date. Apply now to gain valuable work experience and earn extra cash this summer. 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 Sat-

urday, 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.gov/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.

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.

Bronx District Attorney's Prom Drive

Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark is organizing the 2nd Annual Prom Dress & Suit Drive, with donations accepted until April 21. Drop off clean, undamaged items, including bags and shoes if available, in the bin in the lobby area at 198 E 161st Street, Bronx.

Bronx River Alliance Open House

Bronx River Alliance is hosting an Open House to celebrate Earth Week at 1490 Sheridan Boulevard, Bronx, on Saturday, April 22, from noon to 4 p.m. Come and join this free event which will include canoeing, a historical walking tour, educational activities & workshops, a bike repair station, teas from The Foodway, live music & performances and more!

Color of Justice Law Day Event

The 2023 Color of Justice Law Day Celebration event entitled, "Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility & Collaboration" will be held at Monroe College, King Hall, 2501 Jerome Avenue, Bronx on Wednesday, May 10, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. RSVP at bit.ly/lawday23 or email Jody McCalla at scsj@monroecollege.edu.

Three Contractors Charged in First Bronx Manslaughter & Criminally Negligent Homicide Case

(continued from page 6)

fied contractor, to obtain a permit. Four notarized documents containing false statements were allegedly filed in Choudhary's name to obtain the building permit, including a forged insurance policy for the worksite.

The district attorney said the building code requires the general contractor to appoint a construction superintendent, a qualified outside professional who visits the site daily to ensure the work is being done according to the NYC building code and sound construction practices. Okoro, a former employee of the NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC), allegedly was paid \$3,000 for the use of his credentials, and allegedly never visited the site.

Clark said that during the spring and summer of 2019, work continued at the premises without a qualified general contractor or construction superintendent monitoring the work. Adesanmi was the designated "competent person" and was supposed to be present at all times. On the day of the collapse, he was not there, Clark said.

According to the investigation, on August 27, 2019, workers were bringing cinder blocks and bricks from the second floor onto a work platform at the third floor. The platform was made of sheets of metal that were placed on top of metal joists. The joists were not properly secured to the structure. Workers had brought nearly a ton of material onto the platform when the unsecured joists fell forward and failed, causing the platform, the workers on the third floor and building materials on the front half of the building to fall onto the workers below.

Several workers received serious injuries and Huerta Mayancela died as a result of blunt force trauma with crushing injuries, according to the prosecution. As reported, construction worker union members held a vigil in September 2019 to mark Heurta Mayancela's death.

In response to a question, Clark confirmed that the building in question, which is still under construction in Norwood, is under new construction management, and none of the former building contractors are involved with the project any longer.

Aside from addressing the fraudulent aspect of the forged paperwork, *Norwood News* asked what could be done going forward in terms of potentially visiting construction sites earlier to ensure all regulations are actually being followed. Vilenchik said that since the incident occurred, some additional actions took effect in terms of the new building construction code 2022, which established criteria for the placement



Photo by David Cruz

A VIEW OF the building collapse that occurred at 94 E 208th Street in Norwood on Aug. 27, 2019, in which construction worker Segundo Manuel Huerta Mayancela was killed.

of cold formed steel poles which he said now have to be inspected by a special inspector.

"Additionally, if you have to store temporary construction equipment the area identified to accept the construction materials must be inspected by a special inspector," Vilenchik said. "Under normal circumstances, this is a licensed professional engineer or [inaudible]." He added that existing laws had also been disregarded in this case, and that DOB wanted to send a message that fraudulently obtaining credentials was totally unacceptable.

In response to a question on whether the City has changed any of its oversight procedures following the incident, Matthew Millner, NYC DOB director of construction safety engineering, said a lot of new regulations were now in effect around cold formed steel, and added that industry notices had been issued to other sites around the use of cold formed steel prior to the incident as well. "It was unfortunate that it [a notice] was missed in this case," he said. "There are a lot of compounding issues that can affect a failure of this nature and it's certainly our goal to help mitigate them."

Millner added there is also a construction safety compliance guide who goes out proactively and inspects sites and tries to catch issues in real time. "We obviously can't catch everything, but we have made attempts to fill in the

gaps here," he said.

Last September, *Norwood News* reported how one woman miraculously escaped injury after a construction site boom truck carrying poles broke and collapsed onto her car in Bedford Park. We had previously reported on a construction-related accident in the South Bronx and the various resulting measures that were taken following the incident, as well as on DOB-imposed fines on various Bronx-based, non-compliant construction-related entities.

Clark thanked all those involved in the investigation. She later offered her condolences, once again, to the family of Huerta Mayancela. Present at the press conference were his wife, Maria, and daughters. Two other family members, twins, were not present. Visibly upset, and with her voice shaking, Maria said, "Good Afternoon. I demand justice for my husband. I know I won't see him again but [inaudible]. To the DA, here in the Bronx, who is doing everything for me, I'm very thankful for this investigation. I want justice for my husband. Thank you."

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

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Public and Community Meetings

The next 52nd **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, April 27, at 7 p.m. at 3100 Webster Avenue (Art Deco Building) at 204th Street. 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, April 25 at 6.30 p.m. on Zoom. The Meeting ID is 859 4776 2187, or to join by phone, dial (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 May (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 dated April 6-19, 2023, in the LR Multiservices advertorial which ran on page 3, Leslie Ramirez was incorrectly referenced as Alexis Ramirez.

Fire on Kingsbridge Road Subway Track

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Video of some flames and smoke seen on the elevated subway platform of the Kingsbridge Road subway station raised alarm bells on Tuesday, April 18. A spokesperson for the MTA later explained that a smoke condition was reported at around 8.05 a.m. and that the 4 train service was suspended until 8:57 a.m. between Woodlawn and Burnside Avenue while FDNY investigated the incident.

Firefighters were also captured on video footage of the incident, posted to the Citizens' App by local residents. MTA officials explained that there was one standing southbound 4 train at Mosholu Parkway that remained at the station while the investigation was underway, and that customers were able to exit or stay on the train during this time. According to the MTA, service was restored in both directions at 8:57 a.m. with residual delays.

When contacted, an FDNY spokes-

person told *Norwood News* a call was received at 8.13 a.m. about a track fire on the IRT 4 (subway line 4), that it was extinguished and that there were no injuries. We asked if the cause of the fire was known. We did not receive an immediate response.



Screenshot courtesy of the Citizens' App
SMOKE AND SOME apparently low flames are seen on the elevated train track at Kingsbridge Road subway station by Jerome Avenue, which serves the 4 train on Tuesday morning, April 18, 2023, while firefighters are seen underneath the track, responding to the incident.

Protestors Rally for Man Shot by Police

(continued from page 1)

about 10 to 15 members of the NYPD. At one stage, these included the Precinct commanding officer, Deputy Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, members of the community affairs team, and other officers who had exited the stationhouse. They faced the protestors behind some fencing which was set up at the entrance, preventing the protestors from entering the precinct grounds.

"You can make this nice and easy right now," Adrian said in part. "Release the names! Give us the names of the trigger-happy cops that almost killed Raul and are still free." Adding Raul only had a 10 percent chance of surviving the shooting, Adrian continued, "He could be dead right now! Thank God he's recovering. But you didn't care at all. Anybody else who did this would be locked up by now but not you, not you because you're in uniform and you got your badges and all of that bullsh*t."

He added in part, "You're going to be punished, and we will keep protesting. We will keep organizing until that day comes and there's justice for Raul. We demand an end to the criminalization of mental illnesses. Calling for help should not be a death sentence. Raul is not a criminal."

As reported, NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell described the incident on March 26, saying, "The caller, a father, described his adult son as having a medical episode, describes he feels he's being followed. He goes on to say, 'If any cops show up here today, I will kill them.'" Chell added that when two offi-

cers showed up at the location, they were met by the father and began to enter the walkway to the vestibule of the building, explaining that the incident began in an apartment.

Chell continued, "At this time, the subject comes out and clearly becomes agitated when he sees the officers, drops a bag, produces a large kitchen knife, starts advancing towards the officers. He's given numerous instructions to drop the knife at which time he does not comply and results in the officers striking the subject."

Chell said police immediately rendered aid and called for an ambulance and De la Cruz was transported to hospital in critical condition. Police said the department were reviewing the tapes and an internal investigation was ongoing into the incident which unfolded within the space of about 28 seconds.

Back at the rally, another female protestor, speaking in Spanish, described Raul as "a young man of Christ." Referring to the responding officers as "abusers," she lamented how police could fire a gun at someone without knowing whether or not they spoke English. "He likely didn't understand," she said, in part.

Another man, speaking in Spanish, said, "It's not possible to call the police for help because you're going to get killed, it's clear." Yet another female protestor shouted fervently and forcefully in Spanish, "We need better help for people with mental health problems!"

Referring to the police response, she added, in part, "There is no regard for [human] life. We want another way



Screenshot by Síle Moloney

RAUL DE LA Cruz was shot by police on March 26, 2023, at his father's home on the Grand Concourse in Kingsbridge Heights, after his father called for help when Raul, armed with a knife, was experiencing a mental health episode.

to respond to those with mental health problems! We want another way! We want another way!" This set off a chant of "Another way, another way! We want help!" by those gathered.

For the most part, police did not respond to the protestors, some of whom held signs which read, "Who will protect us from the police?" and "Justice for Raul."

Gothamist had reported that on the day of the incident the father of the victim, identified as Santo de la Cruz, had reportedly not dialed 911 but 311 for his son who was reportedly experiencing "a schizophrenic episode," and that his father asked 311 for medical authorities to commit Raul before something went awry.

Gothamist had reported that they were informed by 311 officials that 311 calls are automatically routed to the NYPD if the incident relates to a mental health crisis and the impacted person is armed, and that police decide which department will be dispatched to handle the situation.

Raul's father reportedly said Raul did not understand English and that police were shouting at his son in English when they arrived. The incident followed an announcement, as reported, in mid-December by Mayor Eric Adams of a new plan, regarded as controversial by some, to provide outreach and care to people with untreated severe mental illness, part of which involves initial contact with police.

Adrian later referenced the mayor's latest mental health outreach program, saying police had been empowered to hospitalize people with men-

tal illnesses without consent. "They get to act with impunity," he said. "You don't get to keep getting away with this stuff without people coming out, and without some f*cking protests, without the demands, without the families, without the support and love that's out here."

At one point, Victor, Raul's brother, approached the barrier outside the precinct entrance holding a sign and was seen talking in Spanish with female members of the community affairs team. Following earlier calls for senior members of the precinct to respond to the protestors, one of the female officers, speaking in Spanish, appeared to offer Victor and one other person the opportunity to speak with the deputy inspector about the incident if he wished.

Some protestors were then heard saying to police, "I think you guys are trying to take advantage of the situation." They suggested to Victor that he call his lawyer for advice and produced a cellphone. Another protestor said to police, "There's nothing they can do so what do you expect to accomplish? Tell us the names and that's it."

Another female protestor was then heard saying, "They're trying to divide us, Yo!" The officers were heard repeating the offer for Victor to talk to Scheublin if he wanted, or later by phone if he wanted. He nodded, and speaking in Spanish, replied, "Thank you," and walked away. The protest broke up about an hour after it began.

Norwood News later spoke with Victor who confirmed the family had only called 311, and not 911. Asked if the family had said they were in danger when they called, he said, "no." Of Raul, he said, "He is a young man of work. We want justice for Raul."

We asked Victor about a report by Gothamist in which Raul's father had mentioned that Raul's faith as an evangelist reportedly made him stop taking medication to treat his mental health condition. Victor replied in Spanish, "I don't know anything about that. I don't know the church in question."

During a general public safety briefing with NYC Deputy Mayor for public safety, Phil Banks, on Friday, April 14, Banks referenced three other police-involved incidents (one fatal) which all took place on April 13 (one in Kingsbridge) and said they were all under investigation but did not talk

about the March 26 incident. We've reached out to the Mayor's for comment.

"Banks said, 'The bottom line here is there are too many weapons on our streets, end of the story, bottom line. The NYPD and other city agencies have seized thousands of illegal guns over the past year, and we will continue to work to drive down gun violence,'" he said. Chell had confirmed on March 26 that the shooting of De la Cruz was already under investigation.

Norwood News contacted the NYPD for comment on the police response to the incident, the demands of the protestors, and whether the two involved officers were still on active duty pending the outcome of the investigation. A spokesperson referred us to their website which explains the department releases body-worn camera video of critical incidents within 30 calendar days of an incident.

According to the NYPD, in some cases, it may take more than 30 days if the investigation is complex, a court issues an order delaying or preventing release of the footage, or additional time is needed to allow a civilian depicted in the video, or their family, to view the video in advance. Critical incidents include [among others] an officer discharging a firearm and such discharge hitting or potentially hitting another person.

Following a 2013 court case, Yanahit Padilla Torres v The City of York, which followed a domestic violence incident when the female victim had not initially been provided with an interpreter when she called police, the City implemented a language access program.

First responders would use a language app to access online interpreters to assist non-English speaking victims in times of crisis. Norwood News asked the NYPD if this policy also applied when a person was armed. We did not receive an immediate response.

Back at the rally, one young girl, identified as Raul's cousin, broke down in tears saying, "He's my cousin. Why you want to kill him? For what? We're just here to be his friend. He's a good man. Ya'll are going to give people a heart attack. You're out of your mind!"

If you or someone you know needs support, call 888-NYC-Well, text "Well" to 65173 or visit nyc.gov/nycwell.

**David Greene contributed to this story*

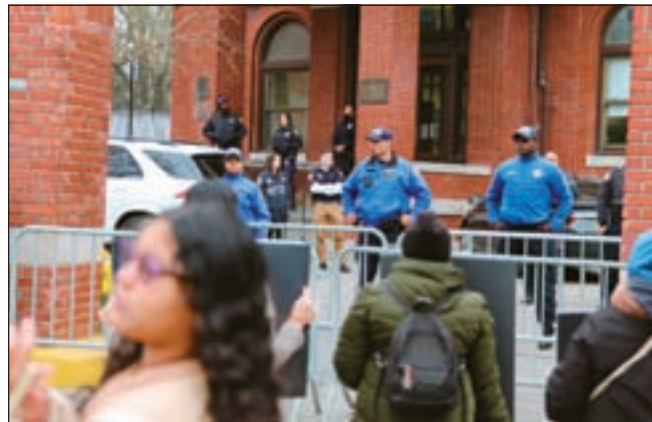


Photo by Síle Moloney

POLICE FROM THE 52nd Precinct remain largely silent during a rally on Friday, April 7, 2023, outside the precinct stationhouse on Webster Avenue in Norwood to protest the police shooting of Raul de la Cruz on March 26, 2023, at Raul's father's home on the Grand Concourse in Kingsbridge Heights, after his father called for help when Raul, armed with a knife, was experiencing a mental health episode.

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