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SILENT DISCO, A BRONX WEEK HIGHLIGHT



Photo by Síle Moloney

COLORFULLY LIT "ROBOTS" on stilts dance the night away with dozens of silent party goers wearing fluorescent cat ears, waving neon rods, as the latter find their soul people through music at a fun-filled, Silent Disco held at Woodlawn Cemetery on Friday, May 12, as part of the Bronx Week 2023 celebrations.

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

A Silent Disco was held at Woodlawn Cemetery on Friday, May 12, as part of the Bronx Week 2023 celebrations. Dozens of silent party goers wearing fluores-

cent cat ears, waving neon rods, danced the night away while listening to their favorite music on headphones and intermingled with colorfully lit "robots" on stilts, which added to the fun

and somewhat paranormal atmosphere.

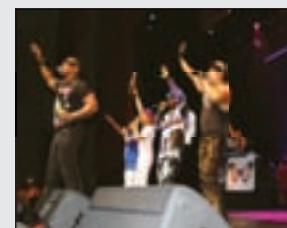
For those unfamiliar with the concept of a silent disco, it consists of real DJs playing music of different genres on different

decks and attendees can choose which music they want to jam to by selecting different colored headsets.

To the uninitiated, watching
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**Bronx Seniors Rally to
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UNHP Celebrates 40 Years as New Report Ranks Bronxites among Worst Affected by Housing Crisis

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

The University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP) was created in 1983 by Fordham University to help Bronxites take ownership of community-based redevelopment efforts. On Thursday, April 27, the organization celebrated 40 years with an event entitled “40 & Still Fighting Fiesta” held at Serviam Hall in Bedford Park.

The organizers also used the occasion to honor UNHP board president, Joe Muriana. It was as a member of Fordham University’s Office of Government & Urban Affairs that Muriana began his relationship with UNHP. “I was the assistant director for urban affairs,” he told *Norwood News*. “[UNHP] was in part a creation of Fordham University. Its board of trustees created it to be a mechanism for the University to become more actively engaged in the neighborhoods on an institutional level in terms of [investment] deals.”

Prior to working at UNHP, Muriana worked as a community organizer with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) in the mid-70s, initially while still a student at Fordham University. He was later hired as a staff member after graduation. He considers his time at NWBCCC as invaluable in terms of learning the needs of the local community and how best to provide needed services, especially financial strategies to fund home ownership.

As board member of a nonprofit organization, Muriana does not draw a salary. During his time as board president, he said he has seen how the quest for profits has transformed the real estate environment in The Bronx. “When we started out, people were walking away from buildings,” he said. “You could buy a deed, literally, for a few hundred dollars, if not less. What we were able to do was to get some people to agree to put money and park it with University Neighborhood... and we would use that money to begin to renovate buildings. But, all the pricing was reasonable then.”

Muriana said the concept of collecting money from residents to buy inexpensive properties has long disappeared, however. “We couldn’t do it at a collection taken up at church,” he said. “We have to have a different approach.”

Now, Muriana and UNHP look toward much bigger entities to secure financing options with more complex financial arrangements. “We can get money to do renovation work through a combination of New York City programs, some federal programs, and some private banks,” he said. Indeed, UNHP lends money towards renovations through its Green Loan Fund. UNHP has used Green Loans to fund roof replacements, boiler repair and other work that reduces operating costs and saves energy.

The need to maintain a multitude of partnerships to keep UNHP on track



UNHP BOARD PRESIDENT, Joe Muriana, (at podium) addresses those gathered for UNHP’s 40th anniversary celebration entitled “40 & Still Fighting Fiesta” held at Serviam Hall in Bedford Park on Thursday, April 27.

with its mission to ensure affordable housing was reiterated during the celebration by Jim Buckley, executive director. Buckley acknowledged the sponsorship of financial institutions like Apple Bank, M&T Bank, Amalgamated Bank, Webster Bank, and JP Morgan Chase, among others. “The ability to have partnerships with such a wide variety of people and organizations is one of the things that sets UNHP apart,” he said.

The 40th anniversary event took place before the publication of a report by the Association for Neighborhood Housing & Development (ANHD) on May 15, which ranked 18 indicators of risk to affordable housing in each of the City’s 59 community districts (CDs). “This year’s risk chart highlights that in low-income communities of color, new units are priced well out of reach for the vast majority of residents,” an extract read in part.

The report found that Bronx CDs ranked highest for threats to affordable housing citywide. Compounding risk factors pointed to long-standing disinvestment from Bronx communities, particularly those with the highest shares of people of color. Bronx CD 1 through 7, spanning west of the Bronx River up to Woodlawn Cemetery, all ranked in the top ten overall threats to affordable housing.

Meanwhile, Bronx CDs 1 to 7 and Bronx CD 12, generally covering Wakefield, Williamsbridge and Baychester, ranked particularly high for eviction filings (between 83 and 121.3 per 1,000 renter households), rent burden (between 59.8% and 64.3%), tenant-initiated housing court cases (between 7.2 and 10 cases per 1,000 renter households), immediately hazardous housing violations (between 95.4 and 244.3 per 1,000 units in 6-unit or more buildings), and unplanned NYCHA service outages (between 13.4 and 56 per building).

These same districts are among those with the lowest income (between 27% of

the Average Median Income (AMI) and 56% of the AMI). They have the highest shares of people of color (between 81.1% and 90.6%), have the highest shares of limited English proficiency (between 19.4% and 26.3%), have high shares of uninsured residents (between 7.6% and 10.1%), and have comparatively low recorded COVID vaccination rates (between 70.4% and 73.2%).

The work of UNHP is felt by Bronxites across the borough. Bedford Park resident, Nelson Guzman, has lived in a building on East 198th Street for a little more than a year. He found his apartment with the help of UNHP. “I’m grateful to the organization, the institution, with their programs,” he said in his native Spanish. “I live alone so I’m appreciative of all the help they offered me.”

Meanwhile, in Co-op City, Esbelin Guzman (no relation to Nelson) and her husband, Julio Almonte, were also helped by UNHP with a myriad of paperwork necessary to become homeowners. Speaking to *Norwood News* in Spanish, Guzman, 65, described the 6-year journey to securing their permanent Co-op City apartment as one filled with financial education training, tax preparation, and a wait-and-see approach.

The couple began working with UNHP in 2016, and when they found a place they liked, they moved in in February 2022. “From the beginning, they helped me with a [training] course on finances, and then they helped us with our taxes,” Guzman said. She credits that training with helping them to be better prepared when shopping around for financial services from different banks. “Today, we own our apartment thanks to this organization and its personnel.” She added, “They were super, super excellent. I feel like we were treated like family. Both my husband and I are very grateful and blessed.”

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the shorter annual Bronx Week Parade and its move from Mosholu Parkway to Grand Concourse between 167th Street and 158th Street.



"Why did they move it? I actually attended the parade a couple of years ago when I was a part of Peace December, where peaceful artists came together, and I attended the festival. I think it's better now that they moved it by the courthouse. I think it has to do with the protection there because things can happen with all these young kids nowadays and people, in general, doing stupid stuff, so it would be a little better by the courthouse. Everything is different now."

Jamaal "Rowstacks" Kennedy,
Soundview
Photo by David Greene



"I think it sucks growing up and being born and raised on this side of The Bronx, and we look forward to it every year as kids, and now I take my kids to it. Obviously during COVID we didn't, but we were talking about looking forward to it again this year, and now not doing it, it kind of sucks. No, we didn't even know. There was no communication sent out. We didn't hear anything about it. The festival was awesome. They're all Black and Hispanic-owned businesses and shops and people come together. Kids go crazy and have tons of fun, families get out. It's really disappointing that we can't do it this year, but if it can return next year, and every year after that, it was a great tradition. They may make things up but it's all about money."

Steven Hernandez,
Norwood
Photo by David Greene



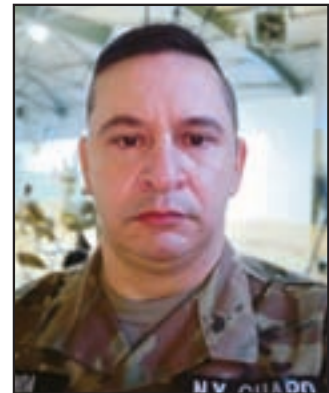
"I feel like for all the people in the community that live over here who should wake up and see something beautiful and traveling to (East) 161st Street is sometimes hard for people. I think rotating the event is fair if we're all about fairness. A lot of people in the community can't afford to travel, so to see a parade or anything that's bright is truly amazing, especially in this time of need for the youth whose parents aren't taking them anywhere."

Trina Rose Lauriano,
Bedford Park
Photo by David Greene



"We are actually just happy it is still being held and The Bronx gets to be celebrated. It's great to see that the Bronx borough president, who is doing an amazing job, has kept the Bronx Week Parade alive. I'm excited to not only see the parade itself, but the community coming together to celebrate and keeping this tradition going, that's what makes The Bronx strong. I was surprised it was moved, but how awesome would it be if the parade traveled through the Bronx each year, so we really get to experience all of the greatness that The Bronx has to offer."

Erika Newsome,
Throggs Neck
Photo courtesy of Erika Newsome



"The change in the parade route caught me by surprise. I guess it's because of the new bike lanes the city put in on Mosholu Parkway. The good thing about the Grand Concourse is there are lots of bodegas so if someone needs water to hydrate and cool off, they're close by. The bad thing about the Grand Concourse is there is very little shade."

Joseph Ronda,
Throggs Neck
Photo courtesy of Joseph Ronda

Bronx Nurses Honored During Nurses Week 2023

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx nurses were honored and celebrated for their dedication and service during Nurses Week 2023.

At NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi, nurses were showered with various honors to mark the occasion. Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80), a Democrat, visited Jacobi Medical Center, part of the City's public hospital system, on Friday, May 15, and presented a proclamation to the nursing staff there in recognition of Nurses Week, which celebrates nurses across the country for all they do.

The proclamation was in honor of "the dedicated nursing staff at Jacobi," according to NYC Health + Hospitals officials. Nurses Week, celebrated annually from May 6 to May 12, is a time to honor, recognize, and appreciate nurses for all they do, according to nursejour-



Photo courtesy of NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi

ASSEMBLY MEMBER JOHN Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80), a Democrat, visits NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi and presents a proclamation to the nursing staff on Friday, May 15, 2023, in recognition of Nurses Week which celebrates nurses across the country.

nal.org.

The week garnered even more relevance in recent years amid the coronavirus pan-

demic, and in The Bronx, home to several large hospitals, the week is an important one.

Zaccaro Jr. broadly repre-

sents some or all of the neighborhoods of Norwood, Olinville, Williamsbridge, Allerton, Pelham Parkway, Pelham Gardens,

Little Yemen, and Morris Park, as well as Bronx Park.

In addition, District 18

(continued on page 6)

Neighbors Lost to COVID Remembered at Annual Memorial



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

THE CELIA CRUZ BRONX HIGH School of Music gospel choir with student director, Aiden Jeffrey (center back), principal, Jarrod Mabry, (center front), and organizer of the event, Marianne Kraft, a longtime resident of Kingsbridge Heights, attend the annual COVID memorial ceremony held at Fort Washington Walk in Jerome Park on Saturday, May 13, 2023.

By SÍLE MOLONEY & MIRIAM QUIÑONES

A now annual COVID memorial ceremony was once again held by local northwest Bronx residents, including Friends of Jerome Park, at Fort Washington Walk at the corner of Reservoir Avenue and University Avenue in Jerome Park on Saturday, May 13, to commemorate those lost to COVID-19 over the course of the recent pandemic.

On Oct. 23, 2021, a tree-planting ceremony took place at the same location to memorialize all victims of the pandemic. Three of the trees were seen this year growing very well.

Marianne Kraft, one of organizers of the event, previously told *Norwood News* that trees were the perfect symbol to honor those lost, since the coronavirus is a respiratory illness and trees provide oxygen to the planet.

Science tells us that through the pro-

cess of photosynthesis, leaves pull in carbon dioxide and water and use the energy of the sun to convert this into chemical compounds like sugars that feed the tree. As a by-product of that chemical reaction, oxygen is produced and released by trees. During some remarks, Kraft said, in both English and Spanish, “[The trees were] a gift of oxygen, beauty and hospitality.”

The Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music gospel choir sang for the occasion, and Fr. Joe Fanco from Our Lady of Angels parish gave a blessing. Meanwhile, the names of those who have passed were read out by Marlene Rosa and Chris Rosa. Lia Tejeda Garcia read a poem called “Let’s Plant a Tree” during the event, while Richard Sherman read a poem called “Monday Note from Nature.”

As of May 13, according to the World Health Organization, 6,927,378 people have died worldwide from the coronavirus. Meanwhile, according to New York State Department of Health, 62,520 people have died from COVID-19 across the State, including 5,103 people in The Bronx.

Some of the names read on the day included Paul Waylonis, Luis Tovar, Diego Rivera, Esperanza Reyes, Angie, Janet Lee Sanchez, Rebecca Santiago, Elvira Montilla, Nancy Sheehan, Fr. Joe Bisignano, Mr. & Mrs. Patterson, and Charlie Guglielmo.

Photo by Miriam Quiñones

MARLENE ROSA AND Chris Rosa read the names of those lost to COVID-19 during the annual COVID memorial ceremony held at Fort Washington Walk in Jerome Park on Saturday, May 13, 2023.



Elections 2023: Campaign Financing Updates

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB) approved on May 15 “matching funds” payments to various 2023 city council candidates for election in the upcoming June primaries. New York City’s landmark small-dollar public matching funds program helps candidates rely on New York City residents, and not special interests, to fund their election campaigns.

The voluntary program “matches” small contributions from NYC residents paid to candidates, allowing candidates who participate in the program to receive up to \$2,000 in public funds per eligible contributor.

CFB officials said the latest approved funds totaled \$733,844 for 18 city council candidates citywide, marking the fourth opportunity for 2023 candidates to qualify for public funding by raising small contributions from NYC residents.

To qualify for public matching funds, candidates must demonstrate support for their candidacy by raising small contributions from within their communities. This encourages candidates to spend more time speaking to voters and less time fundraising.

In terms of local Bronx candidates, District 12 Democratic City Councilman Kevin Riley had \$43,344 in public funds paid to him on May 15. This is also the total amount of public funds paid to him to date for the 2023 election cycle. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of the candidate as of March 15 was \$37,330.

The maximum public funds payment for each election is \$184,000 and five percent of all payments are reserved until the last pay-



Photo courtesy of Bernadette Ferrara

DISTRICT 13 DEMOCRATIC City Council candidate Bernadette Ferrara poses with paperwork under a sign for New York City Board of Elections in or around April 2023.

ment. The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate’s council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 51.1 percent.

The percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources for Riley was 81.2 percent. Aggregate contributions refer to the total dollar value of all contributions reported from any one donor.

The total amount of public funds paid to Riley to date for the 2023 election cycle is also \$43,344. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of the candidate as of March 15 was \$37,330. The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in Riley’s council district, as of

(continued on page 7)

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Bronx Nurses Honored During Nurses Week 2023

(continued from page 4)

City Council Member Amanda Fariás and District 13 City Council Member Marjorie Velázquez had earlier paid a visit to the hospital, located at 1400 Pelham Pkwy South in Morris Park, on Tuesday, May 9, to also present nursing staff with proclamations on behalf of the New York City Council Bronx Delegation.

Again, according to Jacob representatives, the proclamations were in celebration of the nurses' contributions to the wider community. As reported, Fariás recently allocated \$25,000 to Jacobi Medical Center's Stand Up to Violence program, which aims to curb the plague of gun violence in the borough. The hospital is one of The Bronx's designated trauma hospitals, specializing in treating and caring for gunshot and other victims of trauma who require specialist care, as well as providing counseling and other support to families affected by gun violence.

Fariás represents some or all of the neighborhoods of Soundview, Castle Hill, Parkchester, Clason Point, and Harding Park while Velázquez represents some or all of the neighborhoods of Allerton, City Island, Country Club, Edgewater Park,

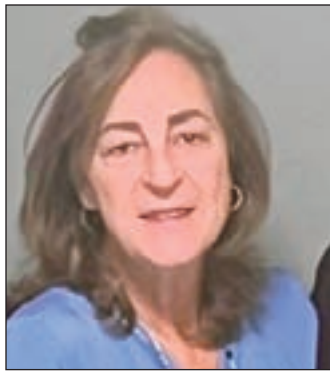


Photo courtesy of Montefiore Health System

MARY ALEVIS, BSN, RN, BASED at the hospital network's Moses campus at E 210th Street in Norwood, was honored during Nurses Week 2023 with a Bilder Award, named after Joan H. Bilder, the associate director of nursing at the hospital network's Weiler division.

Ferry Point, Locust Point, Morris Park, Pelham Bay, Pelham Gardens, Pelham Parkway, Schuylerville, Silver Beach, Spencer Estates, Throggs Neck, Van Nest, Waterbury LaSalle, Westchester Square, and Zerega.

The two were joined on the day by Dr. Nancy Kheck, director of health and hu-



Photo courtesy of Montefiore Health System

RYAN GIL, BSN, RN, CCRN, BASED at the hospital network's Wakefield campus, was honored during Nurses Week 2023 with a Bilder Award, named after Joan H. Bilder, the associate director of nursing at the hospital network's Weiler division.

man services for Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, who also presented an award to the nurses on behalf of the borough president.

Meanwhile, at Montefiore, spokesperson Alex Gomez, said, "Our celebration of Nurse's Week 2023 reflects Montefiore's deep appreciation for our colleagues and the vital role nurses play in positively impacting the lives of our patients and community delivering exceptional patient care."

He said one of the highlights of this week was the Bilder Awards, named after Joan H. Bilder, the associate director of nursing at the hospital network's Weiler division. "This annual award recognizes four nurses for their commitment to providing exceptional patient care," he said.

Wendy Irizarry, BSN, RN, located at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore was one of the recipients of this award. "Wendy is a passionate teacher who takes pride in helping novice nurses develop a love for learning," Montefiore officials said. "She can adapt to critical situations and confidently cares for newborns and adults. Wendy is a strong advocate of multi-disciplinary initiatives such as nurse-led rounds, the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit transport team, and delirium reduction."

Colleagues described Irizarry as compassionate and dedicated to providing family-centric care for patients and their families at CHAM, and someone who demonstrates respect and holistically cares for her patients. Irizarry is currently working towards obtaining her CCRN certification, Montefiore of-

ficials said.

Lisa Hoyte, BSN, RN, based at Jack D. Weiler Hospital at Montefiore was another award recipient. "Lisa embodies Montefiore's principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion," Montefiore officials said. "She is a mentor and educator while working collaboratively with peers and the multidisciplinary care team."

They said Hoyte demonstrates attentive management of medications for patients in hemodynamically unstable conditions, as well as fulfilling the basic human needs of incapacitated patients and providing comfort to those who are frightened. "Additionally, she is an active member of the New York Black Nurses Association and is pursuing certification in CC and wound care," they said.

Ryan Gil, BSN, RN, CCRN, based at the hospital network's Wakefield campus, also received the award. "Ryan uses his clinical judgment to prioritize the nursing care needs of his patients," Montefiore officials said. "He is a strong advocate for the Magnet and serves as chair of shared governance, participating in multiple committees."

Magnet refers to the American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet Recognition Program. The program designates organizations worldwide where nursing leaders successfully align their nursing strategic goals to improve the organization's patient outcomes.

They said Gil incorporates Montefiore's values in all aspects of his clinical practice, serving as a mentor and "exemplary role model" for novice nurses. "During the Magnet certification process, surveyors recognized Ryan for his passion, engagement, and dedication to his patients, their families, and peers," Montefiore officials said.

Finally, Mary Alevis, BSN, RN, based at the hospital network's Moses campus at E 210th Street in Norwood, was also honored with the award. "Mary is knowledgeable about the latest policies, procedures, and best practices," Montefiore officials said. "She willingly shares her challenges and learning experiences with others to help them learn. Mary is always on time and sets an excellent example for her colleagues."

They said Alevis communicates expectations clearly and works well with others. "When working with patients, she is compassionate and respectful of their vulnerability during hospitalization," they said.

May 12 marks the birthdate of celebrated nurse, Florence Nightingale.

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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Law Day Marked at Monroe College

Law Day 2023 was commemorated at Monroe College School of Criminal and Social Justice on May 10. New York Supreme Court Judges Leslie Stroth and Kathy King and New York City Criminal Court Judge Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor were part of the planning committee who worked with the college's academic leadership team to attract over 120 high school students to attend. They said students interacted and networked with a distinguished panel of professionals during the event.

The panelists comprised Justice Eddie McShan of the appellate division, chief attorney of citywide operations at the Legal Aid Society, Tina Luongo, bureau chief at the Bronx District Attorney's office, Wanda Perez-Maldonado, commissioner of jurors at Westchester County, Dr. Betty L. Campbell, Professor Salihah Denman at New York Law School. The panel was moderated by American Bar Association president, Deborah Enix-Ross, who guided the conversation centered on this year's Law Day theme of "Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility, and Collaboration."



Photo courtesy of Judge Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor
PANELISTS AND ORGANIZERS of a Law Day 2023 event held at Monroe College pose for a photo on May 10, 2023.

DR Senate Delegation Visit NY Senate

The New York State senate received a visit from an official delegation from the Senate of the Dominican Republic, headed by the president of the upper chamber, Eduardo Estrella on May 17. The historic meeting marked the first time a Dominican senate president was invited to the New York Senate. The delegation comprised distinguished senators who participated in a series of meetings and events with the aim of promoting exchange and collaboration between the two legislative bodies. State Sen. Luis Sepúlveda (S.D. 32) was one of the chief architects of the visit.

Paperhanger Apprentice Recruitment Drive

The Finishing Trades Institute of New York will conduct a recruitment drive from June 16 through June 29 for 50 paperhanger apprentices, the New York State Department of Labor announced on May 16.

Applications can be obtained, **in person only**, from the Institute, located at 45-15 36th Street, Long Island City, NY 11101, from 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., Monday through Friday, during the recruitment period. **Only 500 applications will be distributed, on a first-come, first-served basis. The recruitment will be offered for ten (10) business days or until 500 applications have been issued, whichever comes first.**

For further information, applicants should contact the Institute at (718) 937-7440. Additional job search assistance can be obtained at local New York State Department of Labor Career Centers. Visit dol.ny.gov/career-centers.

Special Ed. Students Race for St. Jude's

Over 100 preschoolers, aged 3 to 5, who follow the "Readiness Program" at the New York Institute for Special Education (NYISE), once more raced their tricycles throughout the school halls for the school's annual "Trike-a-Thon" fundraiser benefiting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Located at Frampton Hall, 985 Astor Avenue in Allerton, this year's school race took place on Wednesday, May 10. From 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., the preschoolers, organized in different teams, put their feet to the gas, so to speak, raising money for a worthy charity, while also, according to the school's



Photo courtesy of the NYISE
A CHILD RACES his tricycle through the corridors of New York Institute for Special Education (NYISE) in Allerton on May 10, 2023.

representatives, demonstrating their gross motor skills.

City Officials Break Ground on New Bronx Animal Care Center

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) commissioner, Dr. Ashwin Vasan, NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) commissioner, Thomas Foley, and Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC) CEO, Risa Weinstock, were set to break ground on a new \$92 million Animal Care Center at 2060 Bartow Avenue in the Baychester neighborhood on Thursday, May 18. City officials said the new 50,000-square-foot center will house admissions, adoptions, medical services and boarding for approximately 70 dogs, 140 cats, 30 rabbits and up to 20 animals of other species.

According to City officials, open areas on the site will include yards to facilitate dog adoptions, covered exercise runs, courtyards and parking for staff, visitors, and animal transportation vehicles, as well as site lighting and low-maintenance native planting throughout. In addition to the animal housing, officials said the center will include a community space. The building and associated landscape are anticipated to achieve LEED Silver Certification for environmental sustainability and DDC is managing the project for DOHMH and ACC.

Elections 2023: Campaign Financing Updates

(continued from page 5)

March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 51.1 percent.

Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Riley's campaign, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 81.2 percent.

District 13 Democratic candidate Bernadette Ferrara, a member of Bronx Community Board 11 and Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance, had \$152 in public funds paid to her on May 15. The total amount of public funds paid to her to date for the 2023 election cycle is \$48,488. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of Ferrara as of March 15 was \$7,046.

The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 88.5 percent. Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Ferrara's campaign, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 96.1 percent.

District 13 Republican and Conservative Party candidate George Havranek had \$0 of public funds paid to him on May 15. The total amount of public funds paid to him to date for the 2023 election cycle is \$127,300. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of Havranek as of March 15 was \$28,244.

The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was

87.2 percent. Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Havranek, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 90.5 percent.

District 13 Republican and Conservative candidate Kristy Marmorato had \$0 of public funds paid to her on May 15. The total amount of public funds paid to her to date for the 2023 election cycle is \$80,712. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of Marmorato as of March 15 was \$26,140.

The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 64.1 percent. Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 87.3 percent.

District 13 Republican and Conservative candidate Hasime "Samantha" Zherka, who previously ran against Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York's 14th congressional district in 2022, though she did not appear on the ballot, had \$38,023 of public funds paid to her on May 15. This is also the total amount of public funds paid to Zherka to date for the 2023 election cycle.

The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of the candidate as of March 15 was \$8,478. The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 76.5 percent.

Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Zherka, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 98.6 percent.

District 14 Democratic candidate Rachel Bradshaw, Democratic female State committeewoman for A.D. 78, had \$45,866 of public funds paid to her on May 15. This is also the total amount of public funds paid to her to date for the 2023 election cycle. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of Bradshaw as of March 15 was \$9,080.

The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 72.6 percent. Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Bradshaw, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 91.3 percent.

District 14 Democratic City Councilwoman Pierina Sanchez had \$128,379 of public funds paid to her on May 15. This is also the total amount of public funds paid to her to date for the 2023 election cycle. The total dollar amount raised from individual, organizational, and all other contribution sources in respect of the candidate as of March 15 was \$32,426.

The percent of contributions reported from individual residents in the candidate's council district, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 29.2 percent. Meanwhile, the percent of aggregate contributions from individuals that totaled \$175 or less to Sanchez, as of March 15, excluding organizational and other contribution sources was 88.6 percent.



All photos by Sile Moloney
CL SMOOTH OF Mount Vernon performs at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of Hip Hop.

KRS-ONE PERFORMS AT the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of Hip Hop.



RALPH MCDANIELS TALKS to the crowd at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of Hip Hop



KURTIS BLOW PERFORMS at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of Hip Hop.



SMOOTH B (RED fedora) and colleagues perform at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the birth of Hip Hop.

Boogie Down Celebrates 50 Years of Hip Hop!

By **SILE MOLONEY**

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts was the chosen Bronx venue for the 50th anniversary celebration of the birth of Hip Hop on Saturday, May 6, when the Hip Hop Fever 2023 concert kicked off in conjunction with Sal Abbatiello of Fever Records.

In the early 1970s, Hip Hop was born in the South Bronx and the concert celebrated the early pioneers of the now world-famous music genre. The show featured performances by Grandmaster Melle & Scorpio, KRS-One, Kurtis Blow, the Sugar Hill Gang, Nice N Smooth, Soul Sonic Force, Cl Smooth, Black Sheep, Keith Murray, and Sweet G.

Hosted by Video Music Box owner Ralph McDaniels and Fe-

ver Records owner Abbatiello, there was also music by Grand Wizard Theodore, DJ Hollywood, and DJ Brucie Lee, all of whom delighted the ecstatic mixed crowd of all generations. The atmosphere was one of old-school vibes and plenty of laughs, with some traveling to the Boogie Down from other parts of the city for the show.

According to the event promoters, Abbatiello, one of the pioneers of Hip Hop, discovered many rappers and DJs like Grandmaster Flash, Kurtis Blow, and Run-D.M.C. at legendary night club Disco Fever. They said Abbatiello's Bronx Latin dance club, The Devil's Nest, is where Latin Hip Hop was born and is now called Freestyle. There, they said he discovered Little Louie Vega,

TKA, The Cover Girls, Lisette Melendez and many more.

Abbatiello got the crowd movin' and groovin' straight away with chants of "Throw your *hands* in the *air*, and make it look like you just don't *care*! If you came to party with us tonight, somebody say, 'Oh *yeah!*'" An enthusiastic crowd delivered with several "Oh yeahs!" in unison. Abbatiello continued, "Yeah, we're gonna party tonight! Look at that line-up, Baby! Give it up for that line-up right there!"

He added, "So, this is the 50th year of Hip Hop; give it a round of applause! We are so blessed that we all been a part of this from the '70s right up until today, and I'm just so happy that we're all still alive!" The music executive later joked, "Beauti-

ful people, make some noise!" before adding that he wasn't forgetting his ugly friends in the house either.

"I see you!" he laughed. "Don't be playin' to the beautiful people" he added, before asking how many people went to the Fever back in 1976 to 1986, and explaining how he later opened Fever 2 from 1992 to 1995 on Tremont and Webster Avenues.

There were lots of additional jokes about the bizarre mix of old and young at the gig, the older folks not making it to the bathroom on time, about the event being [allegedly] sponsored by Geritol, and before raising expectations by asking who was celebrating a birthday, Abbatiello confirmed there were to be no freebies, "just

Happy Birthday!"

There was also some friendly shade thrown at the "cheap-ass balcony people" who Abbatiello joked had just shown up on the night, paid at the door, and were like, "Yo, there's still seats??"

There were also shout-outs given to Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, as well as to all the moms for Mothers' Day. "Way to go my beautiful mothers, my single mothers, my married mothers, my cheap mothers," Abbatiello joked, before calling on them to recall all those who ever disparaged them to join him in a rousing rendition of Gloria Gaynor's *I will survive!* "Give it up ladies," he said. "Happy Mothers' Day and Happy 50th Hip Hop Day!"



Letters To The Editor

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

Debt Ceiling

Shame on U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer for scaring 65 million seniors by claiming that if we don't extend the federal government debt ceiling, they may not receive their monthly social security check. Schumer should be aware that as a member of Congress in 1996, members passed a law, Section 1145, "Protection of Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds." This legislation ensures that social security checks will keep flowing, even if the U.S. government begins defaulting on its other existing financial obligations.

The law allows social security and Medicare trust funds to be drawn down to continue paying benefits until the debt limit is raised. It also prevents those funds from being used to pay for any other government programs. Uncle Sam has taken in over \$2 trillion in revenue for fiscal year 2023. Rest assured, Schumer, his wife, Iris Weinshall, and millions of seniors will still receive their SSI checks. Perhaps Schumer needs to take a cognitive memory test so constituents can be sure he is aware of the facts.

**Larry Penner,
Great Neck**

Budget Failures on Bail & Pot

Granted, Republicans are the worst, especially with their continued support of would-be dictator Donald Trump, but the State budget came a month late because of Democrats fighting among themselves. Still, they messed up by not eliminating bail and by authorizing a crackdown on "unlicensed" marijuana shops. It's again apparent that Republicans are not the only problem.

Again, bail should not have been reformed. It should have been eliminated. Have defendants held if there is a good reason to believe they are dangerous, won't show up for trial, or are repeatedly arrested. All others should be released pending trial. This way, no one is imprisoned because they don't have money and no one dangerous is released because they do.

New Jersey has eliminated bail and The Daily News editorial writers have called for its elimination here. I'm glad when they agree with me on something. But the only legislator who has called for eliminating bail is a Republican, State Sen. Jake Ashby. As for the budget, calling for crackdowns on "unlicensed"

marijuana shops with fines and confiscation (which is stealing when the government does it) of their product, that is indefensible.

When there are only a handful of shops that are licensed, we should not have to travel far out of our neighborhoods to buy pot. Taking forever to license these businesses is the reason unlicensed businesses opened out of necessity. If they finally open a licensed shop in my neighborhood, I'll still go to the unlicensed one that's selling a superb product. Like with anything else, I'm loyal to good businesses, even if they are not licensed by a government that cannot be described as good.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

Bronx CB7 Manager Off to a Wrong Start

I, with others, wished our new Community Board 7 district manager the best of luck in her new position. However, I was alarmed, along with others, during our morning coffee session when we read her first priority was to get Pride flags displayed on Mosholu Parkway. That's the last thing we need with all the other issues facing our community!

Obviously, she failed to recognize that the motion made to get these flags displayed never made it out of the com-

mittee. That should have told her something. I have a miniature Pride flag that I accepted when it was shoved into my hand while leaving a subway station in the City. It fit perfectly on the bottom of my bird cage.

**Richard Marias,
Norwood**

Editor's Note: The Bronx CB7 district manager, Karla Cabrera Carrera, did not say that her first priority was to "get Pride flags displayed on Mosholu Parkway." In response to previous motions to fly a Pride flag at two specific proposed sites within Bronx Community District 7 (CD7), as reported, Bronx CB7 approved a motion to fly a Pride Flag somewhere in Bronx CD7 during Pride Month (June). Bronx CB7 board chair, Yajaira Arias, told Norwood News she wants to make this happen. The exact location is still to be decided upon by the board, and a permit will need to be requested also.

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 in response to published articles. Thank you.

Jerome Gun Hill BID Hosts Mother's Day Celebration

By DAVID GREENE

Mothers and other visitors to Jerome Gardens Plaza enjoyed an afternoon of free music and giveaways on Saturday, May 13, as the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID) held its annual Mother's Day celebration. Held inside plaza, located at East Mosholu Parkway North and Jerome Avenue in Norwood, the free event featured a live band, a sketch artist, and giveaways.

Daniela Beasley, executive director of the BID, said, "This event is part of a spring event series that's funded by the New York City Small Business Services. They gave the BID a small BID grant and so we're using those funds to bring people out to the neighborhood and show them that we're doing work to make the neighborhood a better place."

Queens-based band The Afro-Latineers performed their unique style of "Jazz with a touch of Salsa" on the day. The band said they performed at the BID-sponsored Fall Festival on Jerome Avenue in the past. The event also featured character artist Mike Logsdon of Draw My Party Illustration, who was on hand to sketch anyone for



Photo by David Greene

QUEENS-BASED BAND THE Afro-Latineers performed their own style of jazz with a touch of salsa at the Jerome Gun Hill BID Mother's Day celebration in Norwood on Saturday, May 13, 2023.

free. Beasley said Logsdon has also worked with the BID in the past, adding, "He loves giving out free drawings to the kids."

After dancing to a few numbers by The Afro-Latineers, Stevens Patino of Kingsbridge told us he's an intern at the Bronx Oncology Living Daily (BOLD) unit at Montefiore Hospital, working with cancer patients and had learned of the event and decided to come along. "They were like, 'If you're interested and would like to come

dance with a band performing live music.' and I was like, 'I'd love too.'"

We asked his dance partner, Eunice Nazar how she liked the performance by The Afro-Latineers. She replied, "The band is great, very lively!" Nazar added,

"I feel great supporting a local event and community solidarity. It's great to be here and feel the music and people and get resources."

Lastly, as part of the Moth-

ers' Day festivities, SB Nutrition, located at 336 East Gun Hill Road, handed out free surprises to anyone who filled out a brief BID survey, asking what improvements and what type of stores they would like to see in the area in the future. Manning a table of free cupcakes with pretzels on top was Asha Finch, owner of the business, who said her cupcakes with pretzels are under 250 calories.

Finch and her husband Mitch opened their shop one year ago. Finch said, "We saved up, we opened a business on Gun Hill, and we want to bring

this to the community. SB Nutrition offers nutrition, Salsa and Zumba classes, self-defense classes, and sells prepared meals that are under 250 calories. Finch said she was grateful to the BID, adding, "They have helped the business get out in the community with similar events." She said she hopes to attend similar events in the future.

Jerome Gun Hill BID is hosting a Juice & Paint event on June 20 at 336 East Gun Hill Road. Follow the BID on Instagram @jeromegunhillbid for details of more events.



Photo by David Greene

KIDS SHOW THE sketches of themselves drawn by Mike Logsdon at the Jerome Gun Hill BID Mother's Day celebration in Norwood on Saturday, May 13, 2023.

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

**Kingsbridge Heights Murder**

The NYPD launched a murder investigation after an apparent fatal shooting in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Wednesday, May 17, at around 6.30 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been shot in front of 3470 Fort Independence Street. Upon arrival, officers found a 27-year-old man, unconscious and unresponsive, with gunshot wounds to the chest. EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to Montefiore Medical Center, where he was pronounced deceased. There are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing. The deceased was identified as Jeremy Valencia of Irwin Avenue in Kingsbridge.

Fordham Heights:**Teen Slashed, Woman Shot**

Police are searching for a group sought following a slashing and shooting. Police said the incident was reported on Saturday, May 13, at 3.17 a.m. near Webster Avenue and East 188th Street. They said a 17-year-old female teen was slashed in the face during a dispute. When a 32-year-old woman attempted to break up the argument, they said she was shot in the leg. Both victims were transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. There are no suspects police said and the investigation continues.

**Fordham Manor:
Three Sought in Slashing**

The NYPD is seeking the public's help locating the people seen in the accompanying photos (above) who police say are sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Sunday, May 7, at around 1.45 p.m., in front of 80 West Fordham Road, a male victim, 38, was approached by a group unknown to him who slashed him in the head with a cutting instrument and stole his cellphone before fleeing on foot. Police said the victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

University Heights:**2nd Man Charged in Murder Case**

The NYPD announced on May 8 that a man, 26, was arrested and charged following the fatal shooting of Johnny Gaston on Burnside Avenue in University Heights last year. On Dec. 15, 2022, police said an armed robbery and shooting took place in front of 1920 Osbourne Place, resulting in the death of Gaston, 32, from the South Bronx. The fatal victim was found in front of 189 Burnside Avenue in University Heights. A second person shot in the groin was hospitalized and was previously reported to be in stable condition. Gibrán Guerrero, 19, from Mt. Hope was arrested on Jan. 3, following the incident.

He was charged with murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, assault, robbery, and criminal possession of a weapon (a loaded gun). On May 8, police said Yorvin Gomez, 26, of Davidson Avenue from Morris Heights was also charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon (a loaded firearm). A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Fordham Heights:**Two Women Shot on Street**

Two women were hospitalized after they were shot by a man in broad daylight by a bus stop on the Grand Concourse in Fordham Heights. Police said that on Wednesday, May 3, at around 1.51 p.m., police responded to a report of an assault in progress at 2479 Grand Concourse. Police said upon arrival, officers found a woman, 44, with multiple gunshot wounds about the body, and a woman, 52, with a gunshot wound to the leg.

They said both victims were transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition, and that there were no initial arrests. The NYPD said a dispute took place inside TD bank on the corner of Grand Concourse and East Fordham Road and believe the dispute arose after a woman cut the shooter off or skipped him in line.

Norwood News contacted TD Bank and asked how many people were in the bank at the time the dispute arose, if the shooter was armed while inside the bank, and whether security had intervened. A spokesperson said the bank had no comment.

On Thursday, May 4, police said that pursuant to an ongoing investigation, Carlos Rivera, 63, of East 178th Street in Mt Hope was arrested. They said he was charged with two counts of attempted murder, two counts of assault and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Norwood:**Man Shot in Gun Hill Road Apt**

A man has been arrested following a shooting inside a residential building on East Gun Hill Road in Norwood, police said. On Sunday, April 16, police were seen responding to an incident at 234 East Gun Hill Road at around 3.30 p.m. Police said at the time, "Confirmed shots fired. No injuries. Property damage only." Police later confirmed a man, 69, was arrested for attempted murder, saying that at around 3.20 p.m. on April 16 police responded to a 911 call regarding shots fired inside the building on the 3rd floor.

They said upon arrival, police were informed that a 69-year-old man had exited apartment #3K, pointed a firearm into apartment #3J, stating, "I will kill you" and discharged one round, striking the wall inside the apartment.

Police said no person was struck or injured and the suspect then re-entered apartment #3K. Officers later arrested Bernard Bulla of 234 East Gun Hill Road at the scene and recovered a black firearm/handgun. Bulla was charged with attempted murder, assault, criminal possession of a weapon (a loaded firearm) and reckless endangerment. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Kingsbridge:**Police-Involved Shooting**

A police-involved shooting took place outside KFC on the elevated subway tracks of the West 231st Street subway station on Thursday night, April 13. Witnesses had earlier reported seeing a man on the elevated train track at 238th Street subway station armed with a gun and acting erratically. Police later said the gun was an imitation pistol.

NYPD Chief of Transit Michael Kemper provided an overview of the incident on April 13 saying his remarks were preliminary as the investigation was still ongoing. He said, "This evening at about 7.55 p.m., officers from the 50th Precinct responded to 911 calls of a man with a gun at the train platform at Broadway and West 238th Street on the 1 line. The callers described a man acting crazy, waving a gun at a crowd, which included children."

He continued, "The officers responded immediately to the train station, walked up the stairs to the elevated platform and were met by multiple witnesses who immediately pointed at the man who was on the platform area and said, 'That's the guy with the gun.'"

Kemper continued, "The officers approached this male. They observed a firearm, a gun in his hand and they ordered him to drop the gun and stop. The male refused to comply with their directions and began walking southbound on the train catwalk, parallel to the train track, and he was walking southbound on the catwalk toward the next stop which is 231st street."

He added, "The officers put the description over the police radio to other units in the field, advising them of the description of this individual, and telling the other officers what direction the male was walking toward. Again, these officers continued to follow this male on the catwalk of the train track, and again, multiple times, warning him to drop the gun and stop."

Kemper went on to say, "This male refused to comply. As the male was approaching 231st Street, responding officers went up to the train platform and they too walked up to the catwalk and started walking towards this armed individual, basically sandwiching him in, the officers sandwiched him in."

He continued, "Again, multiple demands from the officers, who were in uniform, were given to the male to drop the firearm and he refused. It also should be noted that multiple times this individual pointed that firearm at these officers up on that catwalk area. It was at the point when he pointed the gun again at the officers when one of the officers fired one round, striking this individual one time to his left hand, causing the

gun to drop and ended the threat."

The transit chief went on to say that the officers immediately went over to the gunshot victim, secured the gun, and rendered aid to him. "The male was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital where he is in stable condition and the officers are not injured at this time," Kemper said. The person arrested was identified by police as Jose Muniz, 32, from the Soundview section of the borough. He was charged with menacing, police said. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Fordham Heights:**Woman 68 Sexually Assaulted**

Police said a 36-year-old man was arrested following an assault and attempted rape of a 68-year-old woman on the border of Fordham Heights and Belmont. Police had been asking for the public's help identifying a person of interest. They said that on Saturday, April 22, at around 6.04 a.m., the female victim was approached from behind by an unidentified individual in the vicinity of East 189th Street and Webster Avenue.

They said the suspect allegedly choked the victim, forced her into a garage, and attempted to remove her clothing but was unable to do so. They said he forced the victim to perform oral sex on him before he fled southbound on 3rd Avenue. Police said the victim was removed to an area hospital by EMS to be treated for her injuries.

The suspect was described as male, between 5 feet, 2 inches and 5 feet, 5 inches tall, had a heavy build, and was last seen wearing an orange, hooded sweatshirt, and dark blue jeans. On Friday, April 28, pursuant to an ongoing investigation, police said Angel Roque of Beaumont Avenue in Belmont was arrested on April 27. Roque was charged with attempted rape, a criminal sex act, sex abuse, criminal obstruction of breathing, and stalking. When asked if Roque was the person sought, police said, "It is believed so." A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

**Group Targeting Teens in
Armed Robberies**

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo (above) who they say are sought in connection to a Bronx-wide robbery pattern, including one in Fordham Heights. Police said that on Saturday, March 11, at around 2 p.m., a boy, 15, was near the intersection of Folín Street and East 182nd Street when a group of five people approached him. They said one person punched the victim in the face before stealing his cellphone and a large amount of cash. "A second individual then displayed a sharp unknown object," police added. "The entire group fled the location on foot in an unknown direction." Police said the victim sustained a minor injury and was treated on scene by EMS.

(continued on page 13)

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG)'s **Spring Uncorked Weekend** explores the savor and science of wine with artistic activities, games, and light bites from Bronx Night Market on Saturday, May 20, and Sunday, May 21, from noon to 4 p.m. Located at Daffodil Hill, NYBG, 2900 Southern Boulevard in The Bronx, sip and savor spring during this wine lover's weekend, featuring wineries from the Hudson Valley, Brooklyn, and Long Island. Enjoy samples, relax to live music, learn the science behind making great wines, and kick back with a variety of crafts and games.

As part of Bronx Week 2023, on Friday, May 19, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., The Office of the Bronx Borough President and partners will host a **Kingsbridge Armory Award** ceremony at King Hall auditorium in Monroe College, 2501 Jerome Avenue.

Four teams from CUNY architectural schools were recently asked to share their vision of a proposal for a vertical farm at the armory. Judging, by mainly city planners, took place last week during a zoom call and the winning team will be announced at this event. There will also be a tour of other parts of the armory [other than the main hall] e.g. the basement area and tower where there is/was a bar/lounge area. All are welcome.

The Bronx Week 2023 honorees will be inducted onto the **Bronx Walk of Fame** on the Grand Concourse near the front entrance of Bronx Borough Hall on Saturday, May 20, at 1 p.m. This year's honorees include Sunny Hostin, Juliet Papa, God-Is Rivera, SWV, and Luis Torres. All are welcome.

The Office of the Bronx Borough President & partners will host the **Bronx Week 2023 Parade** on Sunday, May

21, at 10 a.m. on the Grand Concourse between 158th Street and 167th Street. This will be followed by **Bronx Week 2023 Food & Arts Festival** on Sunday, May 21, from noon to 5 p.m. on the Grand Concourse between 164th Street and Lou Gehrig Plaza. Also on Sunday, the **Bronx Week 2023 Concert Finale** will run from noon to 6 p.m. at Joyce Kilmer Park (161st Street and Grand Concourse). All are welcome.

Bronx Community Board 7 will be hosting a **Flagging Ceremony** at Woodlawn Cemetery, 3800 Jerome Avenue, on May 23, at 10 a.m. to honor the community's veterans. All are welcome.

KIDS

The movie, "**Encanto**," will be screened on Thursday, May 18, from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. by NYC Department of Parks & Recreation in conjunction with District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz. This event is FREE and open to the public. Glass bottles and alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited. In the event of heavy rain or extreme weather, the screening may be canceled. The decision to cancel the event will be made prior to the screening and will be promptly posted on our website. For more information visit nyc.gov/parks or call 311. Contact (212) 360-1430 or accessibility@parks.nyc.gov for more information regarding accessibility.

A **Weird Science Fair** will be held on Tuesday, May 23, in the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East, in Norwood. If you have a love of science, grab your lab coat and goggles for volcano eruptions, exploring space and more! Email Ana.Torres@parks.nyc.gov or call (718) 543-8672 for more details.

MUSIC

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, Bronx, NY 10468, is proud to present the exclusive NYC appearance of **Los**

Van Van, Cuba's legendary Grammy Award-winning dance band, on Friday, May 26, at 8 p.m. Known worldwide for their iconic live performances, the group features three of the children of the late founder Juan Formell, leader and drummer/timbalero Samuel Formell, bassist Juan-Carlos Formell, and the family's youngest daughter, lead vocalist Vanessa Formell. Tickets can be purchased by calling the box office at (718) 960-8833, or online at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/los-van-van>.

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, The Bronx, has advised that **Tito Puente Centennial**, a tribute to the 100-year legacy of Tito Puente, originally scheduled for Saturday, May 20, has been **rescheduled to Saturday, March 2, 2024**.

MOVEMENT

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 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/>.

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.

NYPD Attempts to Curb Riders of Illegal Bikes Again

DAVID GREENE

Nearly a year after the NYPD rolled out a new initiative to help crack down on illegal All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) dirt bikes, and scooters, the NYPD's Community Response Team is back with over 300 officers from around the city, and are now working together to track riders caught using them. During a press conference covering several different crime-related topics on Friday, April 14, held at the Tweed Courthouse in Lower Manhattan, the City's deputy mayor for public safety, Philip Banks III, and NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell addressed the hot-button issue.

Banks said, "We hear this time and time again from the residents, that these vehicles are being driven recklessly around the neighborhoods and being operated at all hours of the night, and people like myself are sick of it. They go against traffic, they ride on the sidewalk, and when I was the borough commander in Manhattan, Chief, it was one quality of life issue that was actually the most challenging. You try and pull them over, they run. You chase them and put innocent people, potential lives in danger."

For his part, Chell said, "Last year, in the summer, we created a community response team out of the Chief of Patrol's office, about 12 cops. We started bringing some cops in

from around the city to help us out and we took over 10,000 ATVs, dirt bikes and illegal mopeds off the street. It was very successful, so this year we made it official. We just rolled out in the beginning of April; every borough has a community response team."

Norwood News recently reported on a rider seen racing his bike inside the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood in close proximity to seniors and kids on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. Chell went on to explain that each community response team consists of a lieutenant, two sergeants, and 16 officers who go after the illegal riders, stolen cars, and so-called "ghost car" vehicles which are cars with fake paper plates. He said the teams are assisted by the New York State Police, the NYPD's aviation unit, the department's intelligence division, as well as the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA), which he said can shut down bridges and provide real time video to the NYPD.

Chell continued, "Last year, on the FDR Drive, I was nearly run over by one of these ATVs." Recalling another bike-related incident the previous night, Chell said, "Last night at about seven o'clock, about 25 quads, the three-wheel quads, came off the Brooklyn Bridge right by One P.P. [One Police Plaza, NYPD HQ]. I don't know if they were trying to send us a message." He continued, "Little did

they know we were out there with Highway and Aviation, and we corralled every one of them on the FDR and we took all their bikes." Chell said officers told him that commuters stuck in the traffic at the time of the intervention applauded them.

He added, "That's a strong message; that's what we're doing, and the best part of last night [was] no one got hurt, no chases." He said the NYPD has confiscated over 860 illegal bikes since Jan. 1. Banks concluded, "We want these individuals to get a motorcycle license, purchase a motorcycle, and operate your vehicle... but you can't do it in these streets."

A few days prior to the April 14th public safety press conference, on Tuesday, April 11, New York City Mayor Eric Adams attended a separate press conference in Times Square, where the NYPD unveiled the department's new crime fighting robots, egg-shaped devices that roll around and which, it is understood, will be deployed in both hostage and potential bomb-threat scenarios.

The new robots are in addition to the so-called "Digidog," a dog-like robot unveiled by the NYPD as part of the department's crime-fighting strategy in February 2021. Its deployment garnered controversy at a time when the City was struggling to feed people during the height of the pandemic, and was seen by

at least one elected official as an ill-judged expense.

The NY Post reported at the time that Bronx and Queens Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), a Democrat, said the money and technology devoted to the robot could have been put to better use. She tweeted, "Please ask yourself when was the last time you saw next-generation, world class technology for education, healthcare, housing, etc. consistently prioritized for underserved communities like this?"

At this year's April 11th press conference, the NYPD also presented new "Star Chase" global positioning [tracking] technology. Unlike the robots, the Star Chase technology, which comprises different types of electronic devices, was demonstrated off-camera.

According to the company's website, the Star Chase vehicle mounted GPS launcher, for example, deploys a GPS tracking tag onto a suspect's vehicle. Once the GPS tag sticks to the vehicle, it communicates positional data to the CoreView mapping platform in real time. "Law enforcement can then plan and coordinate an informed tactical response to make a safe arrest while maintaining community and officer safety," an extract from the company's website reads.

(continued on page 13)

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

Kingsbridge Armory Residents Meeting

A Kingsbridge Armory residents meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 24, at 5 p.m. at Walton High School, 2780 Reservoir Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468. To register, visit www.eventbrite.com, and search for "Together for / Juntos Para Kingsbridge: Residents Workshop."

Bronx CB7 Veterans' Resource Fair

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) is hosting a Veterans' Resource Fair on Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 East Kingsbridge Road. For more information, contact CB7 District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera, on kcabrera-carrera@cb.nyc.gov or call (929) 496 0748.

Mobile Office Hours for District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz

The councilman said his constituency district office, located at 277 West 231st Street, is under construction and is set to be completed soon. While this happens, his team is hosting mobile office hours at public libraries across the district, and he said residents can stop by anytime between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. during these designated mobile office hours.

The team will be available at Mosholu Library, 285 East 205th Street on the first Monday of the month, at Van Cortlandt Library, 3882 Canon Place, on the second Tuesday of the month, at Riverdale Library, 5540 Mosholu Avenue, on the third Wednesday of the month, and at Kingsbridge Library, 291 West

231st Street, on the last Thursday of the month. Call (718) 549-7300 to reach the team.

Bedford Park Road Closure

SKF General Contractors LLC will be fully closing Creston Avenue between East 197th Street and East 196th Street, with use of a crane to erect a new building at 2736 Creston Avenue from May 23 to June 23, 2023, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, one to two times per week.

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.

Reprieve for Parking/Camera Tickets

District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz said NYC Department of Finance has introduced an online payment plan enrollment for people with parking and camera tickets that have not been paid and who are in default – known as "judgment debt." Customers with \$350 or more in parking and camera ticket judgment debt can now enter into an online payment plan with the department to make payments over time instead of paying all at once, which can prevent enforcement actions such as having a vehicle booted or towed. Visit www.nyc.gov/parkingticketpaymentplans to learn more.

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 Toastmasters Club of Riverdale

The next meeting of the **Bronx Toastmasters Club of Riverdale** will be held on May 24 at 7.30 p.m. at The Riverdale Neighborhood House AND online. For more info, email bronx-toastmastersclub@gmail.com.

New York State Primary Elections June 27 Key Dates

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

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

Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) launched an affordable housing lottery for housing units at 1169 River Avenue in Concourse, a 19-story mixed-use building in Concourse, The Bronx, with a deadline of **May 22**. HPD also launched a lottery for housing units at 1760 Grand Avenue, a 7-story, mixed-use building in Morris Heights with a deadline of **May 19**, and a separate affordable housing lottery for units at 2441 Crotona Avenue, a 7-story residential building in Belmont with a deadline of **June 20**. Visit www.norwoodnews.org, and search for "affordable housing" for more information.

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

Switch Replacement Work on D Line

The MTA announced that switch replacement work will begin on Monday, May 15, at 5 a.m. through Monday, July 3, at 5 a.m. on the B, D, F and M Sixth Avenue subway lines. These switches near West 4th Street in Manhattan will allow the B, D, F, and M trains to move between the uptown local and express tracks. As a result, there will be several service changes on the A, B, C, D, F and M lines effective May 15. Visit www.norwoodnews.org and search for "Replacement Work on B, D, F, M" for more information.

First Annual Bronx Aging Advocacy Day Held

By ARIEL PACHECO

Amid proposed budget cuts, the first annual Bronx Aging Advocacy Day was held on May 1 on the steps of Bronx Borough Hall as elected officials, advocates, community organizations and seniors gathered to help fight for the protection of equitable services for the elderly population.

Mayor Eric Adams' proposed City budget for fiscal year 2024 was set to see reduced city funding for many programs that provide essential services to the elderly, including cuts to older adult centers and home-delivered meals. The City Council's budget response called for increased funding for these programs, however, along with calls to provide holiday and weekend meals for seniors. The deadline to implement the City's budget is July 1.

"We are standing here today to advocate for a budget that does not cut our services, but adds to our services," said Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson. "Sadly,

we are seeing proposed cuts. We are seeing \$7 million cuts in older adult centers, \$5 million cuts in cuts for home delivered meals, and the elimination of \$1 million of a one-time reimbursement for home-delivered meals just in this adopted budget alone."

Gibson called on Adams and City Hall officials to "stand with our seniors" in maintaining funds for these programs. Among the changes Gibson said she wished to see in a revised budget were better pay for human service workers. "We are also calling for pay parity for human service workers who have been in the trenches," said the borough president. "Human service workers are valuable parts of our infrastructure, and they don't get the pay that they deserve."

Gibson also noted that many older adults struggle with a gap in their digital knowledge and that the pandemic left that portion of the population disconnected from families and friends. "During the



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

ELECTED OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY organizations, and seniors gather on the steps of Bronx Borough Hall on May 1, 2023, to call for the restoration of cuts in the City budget to fund various services and programs for seniors.

pandemic many of us were disconnected," she said. "We did not have the digital equity and the tech access to reach out. The programs we are talking about have proven successful; they make a difference."

Meanwhile, District 16 City Councilwoman Althea Stevens, who represents the neighborhoods of Claremont, Concourse, Concourse Village, Highbridge, Morris Heights, Mount Eden, and Morrisania, was also in atten-

dance. Stevens spoke on her prevailing wage bill, which she said would establish prevailing wage requirements for city-contracted human service workers.

"That's something that's not talked about," Stevens said. "How are we ensuring that you're able to age with dignity and that you are getting the things that you deserve?"

Several older adults in attendance were later given the opportunity to share their personal experiences of using City services and raised concerns about how potential cuts would alter their respective lifestyles.

In reference to the various services which she said are so appreciated by Bronx seniors, Bernadine Harding of the Lafayette Morrison NORC Center, said, "They have a wonderful arts and crafts programs for us. It gives me something to do during the day and that's very helpful for senior citizens' mental health." She

(continued on page 15)

CRIME FILE CONTINUED

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



(continued from page 10)

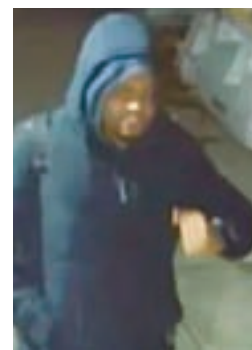
Fordham Manor Stabbing

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompany photos who police say are sought for questioning in connection with an attempted robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police that on Tuesday, March 28, at around 5.30 a.m., the male victim, 30, was walking at the corner of Grand Concourse and East Kingsbridge Road when a group approached him and grabbed the neck chain.

They said when the victim struggled, a member of the group displayed a knife and

stabbed the victim in the chest, causing a puncture wound. "The individuals fled on foot northbound on Grand Concourse," police said. "The victim was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition."

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 CrimeStoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDtips. All calls are strictly confidential.



NYPD Attempts to Curb Riders of Illegal Bikes Again

(continued from page 11)

On Sunday, April 30, at another NYPD-related press conference held inside Castle Hill Library, Adams and Chell unveiled yet another type of Star Chase device for civilian use which can assist with auto theft prevention. It consists of an electronic tracking card which, once activated, can track the location of a stolen vehicle.

During the same press conference, *Norwood News* asked Chell for more information on how the police-tracking system [vehicle mounted GPS launcher] worked, which is different from the civilian-use technology. He replied, "It's just a handheld device or a device on the front of a car and it shoots a sticky-glue device, and it hits the back of a [pursued/stolen] car, it sets off a GPS so we can track the car."

He said the pursued/stolen car can then be followed by a helicopter, and patrol cars can also follow at a safe distance without causing injury to the public and without risk of losing sight of the pursued vehicle, since the helicopter is tracking it. The patrol cars can then close in on the pursued vehicle once the driver either stops or abandons it. Chell was asked if the Star Chase technology also worked on illegal bikes. He replied, "Not allowed to use it on ATVs." When asked if it worked on any other types of bikes, he replied, "No."

Over the last few years, a large band of bikers of every type of two and three-wheeled vehicle imaginable has been seen at least once a year, always on Sundays, rolling down the Grand Concourse or across Fordham Road.

Police radio transmissions heard by *Norwood News* on Sunday, March 26, referenced an NYPD helicopter which was seemingly hovering over a large group of bikers who had converged outside the entrance of the Allen Shandler Recreation Area inside Van Cortlandt Park. The recreation area is bordered by Jerome Avenue to the east, the Major Deegan Expressway to the west, East 233rd Street to the north, and Mosholu Golf Course to the southeast.

The transmission also referenced at least one NYPD ground patrol unit in pursuit of a pair of pick-up trucks which were apparently loaded with ATVs, and which were headed northbound towards Yonkers. Based on the radio transmission, it was understood police were attempting to intercept the trucks. *Norwood News* contacted the NYPD for more information about the alleged pursuit but did not receive a response.

Meanwhile, on the same day, around the same time, *Norwood News* witnessed a group of around 250 bikers riding various types of illegal bikes along the outer two lanes of the



Video still by David Greene

DOZENS OF RIDERS of illegal ATVs, dirt bikes, and motorcycles head south down the Grand Concourse service road before crossing Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park and turning onto Van Cortlandt Avenue and heading into Norwood on Sunday, March 26, 2023.

Grand Concourse, and on the sidewalk, coming from the direction of Jerome Avenue / Tracey Towers, later turning left onto Van Cortlandt Avenue, across Mosholu Parkway, and up the hill into Norwood.

The group included several ATVs, at least one of which was being dangerously driven on the sidewalk close to the entrance of a residential building by a middle-aged man who was simultaneously smoking a cigar. The bikers took several minutes to pass through the area and did not stop for the red light on Grand Concourse at Van Cortlandt Avenue, nor for the other drivers who had the right of way. It would be another minute or two before the ear-deafening sound of the bikes' collective exhausts dissipated and the area returned to near silence.

During the 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting on May 27, 2021, *Norwood News* was present when police officers proudly wheeled several confiscated motorbikes past a group of appreciative residents who cheered and applauded the display. During the course of the meeting, several more

illegal bikes were taken from riders passing through the blocks around the Webster Avenue 52nd Precinct stationhouse.

We later reported on the announcement on Aug. 2, 2022, of a citywide crackdown on illegal bikes during a press conference held at the 52nd Precinct hosted by the NYPD's Highway One Captain Lee Manuel and the 52nd Precinct Commanding Officer Deputy Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, during which dozens more confiscated illegal bikes were placed on display.

More recently, we reported on the sentencing by Supreme Court Justice Linda Poust-Lopez on Thursday, April 20, of Mario Rosario to five years' probation and 500 hours of community service for his plea to criminally negligent homicide in the death of his son, 4-year-old Mario "Mjay" Rosario, as the two rode on a scooter and crashed into a car in the Fordham Manor section of the borough on August 15, 2022, as reported.

Police said the child had not been equipped with a helmet at the time of the collision. The NYPD had previously confirmed to *Norwood*

News that the scooter driver's "criminal possession of stolen property" charge pertained to a scooter that was being driven by the boy's father at the time of the accident.

On Sunday, April 2, Scheublin said of officers from the 52nd Precinct confiscated 30 bikes in one day. "We got them from all over, from a bunch of different locations," he said. "We prefer to get them when they're stopped to avoid the pursuit, but sometimes that's the way it goes, but most of these were gotten when they were stopped."

Scheublin concluded, "It's crazy, right? I love to take them. We were leading the city in the 5-2 last year. We had 540 for the year as the final number." He added, "This year, we're looking to do the same. We're starting now with some initiatives. Like I said, this past Sunday we took 30, and we're going to continue. It's not only dangerous [to ride the bikes] on the sidewalk but they use them to commit robberies and other acts of violence around the community, so it's always been a priority for us."

*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.



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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, May 25, at 7 p.m. at Annunciata Bethell Senior Center, 243 E 204th St., Bronx, NY 10458. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23, 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.

Details of the next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board meeting are to be confirmed. 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.



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THE CITY OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF BRIDGES CONSULTANT PROGRAMS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of New York has Request for Proposals available for qualified Consulting Engineering Firms interested in the following Proposed Contract.

Project or Contract Title:
Request for Proposal – Resident Engineering Inspection Services in Connection with Component Rehabilitation of 10 Bridges in Queens.
Contract No. HBCR22B
Pin: 84123QUBR582

Expected Contract Term: 1155 Consecutive Calendar Days starting from the date of the Notice to Proceed

Description of Services Required:

The services to be procured is the Resident Engineering Inspection Services in Connection with Component Rehabilitation of 10 Bridges in Queens.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Optional) has been scheduled for May 30, 2023, Time: 10:00 AM through Zoom. Proposers who wish to connect to the Zoom Conference will need a Zoom ID and Password or the link. Therefore, proposers who wish to connect will need to contact the authorized agency contact person via email at least three (3) days prior to the Pre-Proposal Conference for the information to connect. Proposers will need to provide the first name, last name of everyone who wishes to connect, name of the organization, phone number and email address.

This Procurements are subject to participation goals for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), as required by Section 6-129 of the New York Administrative Code. The M/WBE goal for this project is 30%.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this RFP must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the RFP, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mocs/systems/about-go-to-passport-page> and click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort" blue box. Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system. To quickly locate the RFP, insert the EPIN 84123P0007, into the Keyword search field. To respond to the RFP, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

Release Date: May 22, 2023

Pre-Proposal Conference: May 30, 2023 at 10AM

Submission of Request for Proposals are due on or before 2:00 PM on June 19, 2023

Silent Disco, a Bronx Week Highlight

(continued from page 1)

everyone “get jiggy with it” in relative silence, it seems somewhat bizarre, but it soon becomes obvious that part of the fun is in attendees “finding their people.” Attendees said they could tell which type of music others were listening to from their

dance moves, or because they were mouthing the lyrics of specific songs. People also felt it was respectful to those buried on the grounds as it was “silent” event.

There was salsa, old-school funk, something for everyone, and some human chains / processions were even forming around

the venue as the silent dancers followed the instructions of the DJs through their headphones. In addition, there was also candy floss, snacks and overall, a good time vibe.

The event was hosted by Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and partners, The Bronx Tourism Council, BronxNet,

Schneps Media, Pix11, News12 The Bronx. “Lauren” from Throggs Neck told us in part, “This is my first time at a silent disco. I’ve seen them before. This is so much fun! I’m meeting all sorts of people from all over my borough. I’m already sweating! The three DJs are unbelievable!”

Man Exonerated after 26 Years for Subway Shooting

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx District Attorney (DA) Darcel D. Clark said on May 10, that a Bronx judge vacated the attempted murder conviction of a Bronx man who served 26 years in prison, after investigations by her office’s conviction integrity bureau, and by The Innocence Project, found that the man had been wrongfully convicted due to ineffective defense counsel. The case related to a shooting that occurred on the border of Fordham Heights and University Heights in 1996.

“Norberto Peets has served 26 years in prison, after being found guilty in a trial where his lawyer overlooked key evidence that could have led to acquittal,” Clark said. “My Office’s Conviction Integrity Bureau has helped bring him some semblance of justice by investigating his claims and joining The Innocence Project to have the charges dismissed and clear his name. Hopefully it will help him as he puts his life back together.”

Officials from the DA’s office said that on May 9, Bronx Supreme Court Justice Ralph Fabrizio vacated Peet’s conviction and dismissed the charges of attempted murder, assault, as well as weapon charges for shooting at people, wounding two, on Sept. 29, 1996, under the elevated subway at Jerome Avenue and East 183rd Street subway station.

According to DA’s office, tak-

ing into consideration that the only evidence pointing to Peet’s guilt was what was described as “questionable eyewitness identification,” Clark concluded that the reliability of the [original] jury’s verdict was questionable, and on Sept. 30, 2022, her office joined The Innocence Project’s motion to vacate Peets’ conviction.

As a result, Peets was released from prison after 26 years. The DA’s office said that separate reinvestigations found that Peets’ trial attorney had not adequately investigated his case and had overlooked key evidence that both pointed to an alternate suspect, and discredited the eyewitness testimony that had convicted Peets.

Clark thanked Risa Gerson, chief of the conviction integrity bureau and Assistant District Attorney Gabriela Tully, who reinvestigated the case. Representatives from The Innocence Project accompanied Peets to the court on May 9. “Mr. Peets has steadfastly maintained his innocence for 26 years,” they said in part.

According to The Innocence Project, on Sept. 29, 1996, a fight broke out at the elevated subway station at 183rd Street and Jerome Avenue. Its representatives said as a man, described as Black, ran down the station’s stairs, he shot two other men, described as Hispanic, and assaulted a third. They said when two officers arrived, the gun-

man began shooting at them.

“One of the officers gave chase, exchanging gunfire as the shooter fled the scene,” they said. “A bloody bullet fragment was found where the gunman had apparently fallen, leading police to believe that the gunman had been shot. Forensic testing was never performed on the bullet, but ballistics showed the bullet had come from the gun of the officer in pursuit of the suspect. By the time the Innocence Project began its investigation, the bullet fragment had been lost.”

Norwood News contacted the NYPD, the Bronx District Attorney’s office and the Office of Court Administration to request corroboration of the veracity of this account of how the shooting unfolded. We did not receive a response from the NYPD or the Bronx DA.

On May 9, The City media publication reported on the history of the case, which included accounts that Fabrizio, the latest judge to preside over Peets’ case, had reversed previous decisions that he himself had made, “re-vacating Peets’ convictions and dismissing his original indictment, burying the case for good.”

The publication also reported on alleged complaints reportedly lodged against the judge by “at least eight defense attorneys and prosecutors,” as well as an allegation by one source that Fabrizio has “a bit of a temper,” but



Video still courtesy of The Innocence Project

NORBERTO PEETS LEAVES Bronx County Hall of Justice, located at 265 East 161st Street in The Bronx, on May 9, 2023, after being exonerated 26 years after he was charged for a shooting that occurred on Sept. 29, 1996, under the elevated train tracks at East 183rd Street subway station at Jerome Avenue in the Fordham Heights section of The Bronx.

that “his approach helps cases progress” through what is often reported as a slow-moving court system.

Norwood News contacted The Office of the Court Administrator for details of Peets’ case. A representative responded, saying, “The case has been dismissed and sealed, so I have

no way of accessing any information.” We were referred by the court administrator to the parties involved in the case for more information. Norwood News contacted The Innocence Project in efforts to reach Peets for comment on the case and will update this story should we receive feedback.

We re-contacted The Office of the Court Administrator to request a comment on Fabrizio’s reported reversal of his previous decisions in relation to Peets’ case and on the reported complaints lodged against Fabrizio by “eight defense attorneys and prosecutors. A representative responded, saying, “The case has been vacated and sealed. That means by statute – it never existed. And we do not discuss complaints against judges nor the reasons for their judicial assignments.”

Norwood News also contacted both the NYPD and the Bronx District Attorney’s office to ask if anyone else, other than Peets, has or had ever been arrested following the shooting. We have also requested more context around the circumstances under which the referenced bullet fragment was lost. We will update this story should we receive any feedback. Anyone wishing to support Peets rebuild his life can contribute to his wishlist by visiting www.amazon.com and searching for “Norberto Peets’ Wishlist.”

First Annual Bronx Aging Advocacy Day Held



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT Vanessa Gibson speaks to those gathered during a rally at Bronx Borough Hall on May 1, 2023, to call for the restoration of cuts in the City budget to fund various services and programs for seniors, as District 16 City Councilwoman Althea Stevens and others look on.

(continued from page 12)

added, “And the lunch is out of this world!”

The New York Academy of Medicine Center for Healthy Aging (NYAM) conducts research programs and policy initiatives to ensure that everyone has access to good health care. NYAM recently launched the “Aging Well in the Bronx survey” in an effort to use the findings to make The Bronx a better place to grow older.

The director of NYAM’s Center for Healthy Aging, Elana Keiffer, said they’ve conducted similar surveys in both Brooklyn and Manhattan and have used the data collected to help make recommendations to improve the quality of

life for seniors.

NYAM has also created an interactive map to help senior citizens locate human resource services and support in every borough. Meanwhile, residents can visit https://nyam.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VJRSdMBvHt5ZNs?Q_CHL=q to complete the survey online. It is available in several languages including Spanish, Bengali, Italian, Russian, and Chinese.

May is officially known as Older Americans Month, with this year’s theme being “Aging Unbound.” U.S. Census data from 2022 estimated that 14 percent of The Bronx’s population are 65 years and older.

Norwood News has contacted the Adams administration for comment on the proposed cuts to senior services and will provide an update upon receipt of any response.

Norwood News contacted the Adams administration for comment on the proposed cuts to senior services. Gregory Rose from NYC Department of Aging press team responded, saying in part, “While this has been a tough budget process for everyone, [we were] able to secure 4 percent in savings by realizing unspent resources from a variety of programs we offer. This will allow us to continue key services to help residents in every borough age in place.”

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