



NORWOOD NEWS

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WILL BABY NICHOLAS SAVE OTHERS?

Photo courtesy of the parents of Nicholas Dominici

NICHOLAS DOMINICI, 1, DIED in a fentanyl-related death on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023 at Divino Niño Daycare Center at 2707 Morris Avenue, The Bronx.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The tragic death on Sept. 15 of one-year-old Nicholas Dominici, apparently from fentanyl-related poisoning, along with three other infants at Divino Niño Daycare Center in

Kingsbridge Heights shocked New York City. An international manhunt ensued, followed by the arrest in Mexico of a fourth person sought in connection to what has been described as a “creative” drug

smuggling operation.

Whether the infant’s tragic death has the potential to save other vulnerable children from a similar fate remains to be seen, but it has prompted the City’s health commissioner, Dr.

Ashwin Vasani, to potentially re-assess the scope of his agency’s inspections of the City’s 600+ homebased daycare centers.

The urgency of the situation was brought into even sharper

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Budding Filmmakers Celebrate in the Oval
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Cops Welcome Families at Open Day
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Police Appeal for Help Locating Missing Girl
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5th Annual 48-Hour Film Challenge “Wraps” in the Oval



Photo by Sile Moloney

SOME OF THE winners of the 5th Annual Bronx 48-Hour Film Challenge display their winning certificates after a screening and awards presentation in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Friday, Aug. 11, 2023.

By SILE MOLONEY

That’s a wrap! Bronx Film 48 hosted its 5th Annual 48-Hour Film Challenge last month with the winning films announced during a special outdoor screening and presentation held in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Friday, Aug. 11.

The evening’s event, which was also being recorded by videographers on the night, was organized in collaboration with the City’s parks’ department and Bronx Council on the Arts. Katelyn Prieto, community liaison at Bronx Film 48, said the annual 48-hour short film-making challenge “[helps] creatives in the community push themselves and celebrate the resilient artistry of The Bronx.”

Ayaris Perez and Edwin Torres are the co-founders of Bronx Film 48, a collective of artists who they say are committed to elevating cinema culture in the borough. During the challenge, filmmaking teams compete to make the best short film possible within a 48-hour time limit.

Eleven short films spanning a range of topics were screened on the night and there were also Q&A sessions held afterwards. Each contestant or group of contestants had concentrated on a particular film genre for their challenge and were given a list of required elements to include in the final cut. These ranged from a given character name, a prop, a quote, a location, and more. All films had to be shot, edited, and filed within 48 hours.

It was the first time for Katia Etienne (lead actor) and Patrice Payne (director) to participate in the event and their first time to create a short film. They said they “blindly” chose a mockumentary theme, which they said was based on an ancestor. Payne said of their genre, “We were just excited about that because we love shows like ‘The Office’ and ‘Parks & Rec.’”

Etienne added, “Yeah, it was fun! It was random! It was wild!” On the time constraints involved, Payne said, “We were nervous but also excited, and it was also like crunch time because it was such a quick turnaround!”

Gregory Hernandez, who is also a co-founder of Bronx Film 48, and director of the award-winning documentary “1.5 Million,” which discusses literacy in The Bronx, was present on the night, though not a contestant. “I love that the organization is continuing to grow and continuing to develop,” he said. “I’m here to support, and I’m so excited to see more films made in The Bronx.”

We asked contestants, Amir Windley, director, and Nicholas Velez, who said he helped with lighting and behind-the-

scenes, what their motivation was for participating in the challenge. “Well, as a filmmaker, you’re always going to be challenged, and you’re not going to get anywhere in life just standing there waiting for something to happen,” said Windley. “You got to go out there and find a challenge for you.”

Meanwhile, Velez said, “My motivation was just to meet other filmmakers who were just as passionate about creating stories and putting forth film and working together.”

Bronx Film 48 seeks to create a space for aspiring filmmakers of color to meet, network, and ultimately create. The organization hosts networking events, accessible public screenings, workshops, in addition to its annual 48-hour film challenge.

Of the winners on the night, Torres said he had some favorites but explained that the ultimate decision was left up to four independent judges, adding there were some who he thought might have placed but the judges obviously thought differently. “The fact that the films are made [at all] and shown online is reward in itself too,” he said.

Marcela Torres, mother to Edwin, who also helped organize the event was happy with its success, saying, “The Bronx creates opportunity to showcase filmmakers and writers and actors, and they do it through a really fun event that brings the community together, and that’s just the best of everything; you showcase, and you share!”

The film challenge is open to creatives over the age of 18 with all levels of experience. For more information on it, and on where to view this year’s films, visit bronxfilm48.com or follow their social media channels.

Of the overall experience, Payne concluded, “If anyone is inquiring about doing the challenge, take the leap and have fun! It’s a wonderful experience and it’s a challenging one if you’re working / going to school, but if I can do it with five jobs at the time, anybody can do it! Go for it!”



Photo by Sile Moloney

SOME OF THE winners of the 5th Annual Bronx 48-Hour Film Challenge display their winning certificates after a screening and awards presentation in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Friday, Aug. 11, 2023.

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NORWOOD NEWS

Norwood News is Recruiting a Sales Executive

Norwood News, founded in 1988 and located at 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, is an award-winning, biweekly, print community newspaper and website which primarily serves the Bronx neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham Manor, University Heights, and Fordham Heights, and to a lesser extent, the wider Bronx. We are currently recruiting for a sales executive to join our growing team. The sales executive will work closely with the editor-in-chief, the designer of our print newspaper, the web designer, and the office manager by proactively selling ads for both our print publication and our website.

The right candidate should have two years previous sales experience, be highly organized, have excellent interpersonal skills, be motivated to respond promptly and attentively to our advertisers' inquiries, maintain a strong network of advertising relationships, have *some* technical skills, a knowledge of the Northwest Bronx and of wider citywide sales opportunities, good grammar and writing skills, and be able to work independently in a fast-paced environment for a busy nonprofit news outlet.

Responsibilities include proactively selling [ideally recurring] ads for both our print publication and website, carrying out all necessary due diligence on advertisers, contract preparation and coordination of signatures by advertisers on all ad contracts and insertion orders, completing and maintaining both electronic and hard copy logs of all ad sales contracts and insertion orders, preparing a biweekly ad schedule ahead of each print edition, which includes details of the ads running on each publication date, the ad specifications, details of each contract run date, etc., liaising with advertisers to fully understand their technical ad requirements and communicating these to the designer, obtaining sign-off from advertisers on any ad amendments and communicating this to the designer, proactively liaising with our office manager to ensure the timely issuance of invoices and assisting the office manager, when necessary, with chasing payment of outstanding invoices, coordinating and furnishing any necessary affidavits requested by advertisers in respect of ads, maintaining and growing a network of advertisers and maintaining an updated, competitive media kit, adding any new advertisers to the distribution list for receipt of hard copies of the newspaper, keeping all expense receipts and submitting expenses electronically via the requisite channels, ensuring advertorials received from partner organizations are proofed and accurate, completing all necessary online compliance and other training.

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- a basic knowledge of advertising law, particularly around legal notices and affidavits would be useful

The salary for this position is \$55,000 per annum plus 15% on sales commissions, paid quarterly, with full benefits. For details on how to apply, please send an email to Síle Moloney, *Norwood News* editor-in-chief, at smoloney@norwoodnews.org.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on a pilot program launched by the City's Parks' department in June 2023 which allows Class 1, 2 and 3 e-bikes and lighter-weight e-scooters on city park drives and greenways. A map is available at nyc.gov/parks/ebikes, showing the greenways and drives that fall under the program, along with a multilingual survey to obtain feedback. The program doesn't allow e-bikes on pedestrian paths, and faster, heavier mopeds or motorcycles are not allowed anywhere in parks or on greenways. The latter vehicles are also precluded from riding on bike lanes, and such drivers must hold a driver's license.



"Basically, I think it's just but unjust at the same time because some people take advantage of the situation but at the same time, people should have the freedom to ride around and not be stopped. If you are a danger to society, then it's understandable why they're stopping you, but if you're not causing any danger to society, I don't see why they would stop you. If you're on an illegal vehicle, then it's understandable, but if you're on an electric vehicle, and you're not riding dangerously, it doesn't make sense."

Eric Caraballo,
Parkchester
Photo by David Greene



"My feelings about it are that it has actually endangered all park users including pedestrians, children, seniors and cyclists. It not only puts the public's safety at risk, it's also taking away the enjoyment from people to use the parkway because people are always looking behind, forward, left and right because of these electric vehicles on parkways. Lastly, there's no enforcement, and a lot of times you can't differentiate between what's actually a legal vehicle and what's not a legal vehicle. Some of the e-scooters that are privately owned go above 20 miles per hour. They actually go 40 miles per hour in some cases."

Roxanne Delgado,
Pelham Parkway
Photo courtesy of Roxanne Delgado



"Really? I didn't know that. I think they all should be banned; they're dangerous. I think they should rethink this because it's bad enough; we're overflowing with them. After the pandemic, we've been flooded with scooters; scooters are everywhere. Scooters, bikes... they are just laying dormant anywhere, everywhere, and they can catch fire with those goofy batteries."

Jake Wilson,
Kingsbridge
Photo courtesy of Jake Wilson



"I think it's okay if a park is big enough and there are wide enough paths or trails like in Van Cortlandt Park, but the problem is there has to be a limited speed limit. It could get dangerous if drugs or alcohol [are] involved and someone could get hurt in a crowded park. Maybe police riding mopeds...maybe it's better to leave them on the street. Soon they will need license plates and insurance on certain roadways. They do make great getaway vehicles for criminals."

Arty Than,
Yonkers, N.Y. (formerly of Riverdale)
Photo courtesy of Arty Than



"I think it's a horrible idea. Motorized vehicles don't belong in the parks, let alone on sidewalks. They pose a danger to children and the elderly and small animals. They belong on the streets."

Charlie Vasquez,
Pelham Parkway
Photo courtesy of Charlie Vasquez

**Sile Moloney contributed to this article*

Jeremiah Ryan Gets 15 Years to Life in Prison for Fatal Shooting of Angellyh Yambo

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Jeremiah Ryan, 18, who was charged last year with the 2022 fatal shooting of innocent bystander and high school student, Angellyh Yambo, 16, in the Mott Haven section of The Bronx, as well as the attempted murder of two of her friends as they walked home from school together, was sentenced on Sept. 15, to 15 years to life in prison in relation to the gang-related shooting.

Ryan, 17 at the time of the unintended killing of Angellyh and the shooting of her friends in crossfire, pled guilty on Aug. 4 this year to second-degree murder, avoiding the need for a trial.

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark said on the day of the sentencing, "The defendant was in a dispute with two men when he fired multiple shots from a 'ghost gun,' striking Angellyh Yambo, 16, and two more teens who were walking home from school. His actions ended the life of a beautiful, young girl and shattered the lives of the survivors and the families of the victims."

She added, "Since Angellyh's death, her family members have channeled their grief into action by starting a foundation to honor her memory. They have met with elected officials and supported legislation targeting ghost guns and have attended multi-

ple anti-violence events my office has held. Through their work, Angellyh's memory will live on forever." Ghost guns are firearms made from components purchased online with no serial number and aren't traceable.

Ryan, now 18 and from The Bronx, was sentenced by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Jeffrey Rosenblueth. Wearing a blue face mask and dressed in court in a faded, green sweatshirt and faded gray sweatpants, which were sliding down his rear and exposing his underwear, and with his hands in cuffs behind him, the 18-year-old remained silent for the most part as he sat beside his legal team during the court proceedings in the Bronx Hall of Justice, and as members of Angellyh's family read various victim impact statements. No cameras were allowed inside the courtroom. The judge explained that this restriction was due to the defendant's age.

As reported, and according to the investigation, on the afternoon of April 8, 2022, in front 510 East 156th Street in Mott Haven, Ryan had a dispute with two men and fired at least six shots, striking Angellyh, a 17-year-old boy, and a 17-year-old girl. The bullet struck Angellyh in her upper back, piercing her lung and pulmonary artery, causing her death.

One of the surviving victims was shot in the left leg, and the other teen

sustained a gunshot wound to the left buttocks. Ryan fled the scene and was apprehended later that day by police, as reported. Numerous vigils and anti-gun violence marches have since been held in Angellyh's memory, including one at her school.

As reported, Angellyh spent some of her childhood in Kingsbridge Heights and had a street co-named in her honor in May of this year. Family members present on the day of the sentencing included her mother, Yanelly Henriquez, her father, Manuel Yambo, her aunt, Mary Hernandez, who was the instigator behind the launch of The Angellyh Yambo Foundation, her aunt, Lissette Camargo, her 4-year-old little brother, Mason, and other relatives, including Abed Henry Henriquez. Camargo and Hernandez read various impact statements, one of which included a direct statement from Angellyh's father.

Some of the family spoke to the media outside the courthouse afterwards and were also seen crying and hugging each other during the reading of the victim impact statements, and after leaving the courtroom. In each case, though emotional when they spoke about Angellyh, their tone grew stronger and more resolute when they addressed Ryan directly inside the courtroom.

Members of Ryan's family could

also be heard sobbing during the court proceedings and a woman who appeared to be his mother called out, "Jeremiah" as he exited the courtroom after the sentencing. For his part, Ryan had remained facing straight ahead at the judge and court officials during the session and, as confirmed by Hernandez and Angellyh's father, who each had a better view of Ryan than members of media during the sentencing, did not appear to turn at any stage to look at Angellyh's family, even as they read their statements and held a photo of Angellyh.

Her family said it was the first time Ryan had apologized for her killing. Speaking in a low voice, and after initially declining to say anything, when asked by the judge, Ryan was later heard saying, "I apologize for my actions. I'm sorry." For the Yambo and Henriquez families, however, his apology came too late.

Summing up her victim impact statement, Henriquez talked of the agony of seeing dozens of autopsy photos of her daughter's lifeless body and how at times, she had wanted to take her own life, saying it had, at times, become meaningless to her. "I'm standing here with all my strength," she said, in part. Later, addressing Angellyh's spirit directly, she added, "Your mother loves you forever and a day and we are here to fight for you."



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Opinion

A Reckoning Arrives Over Campus Sexual Assaults

By FRANK AUSTIN

The persistence of sexual assault has always relied on an imbalance of power, particularly on college campuses. Whether it's the violence of the assault, the reliance on public pressure and intimidation to keep victims silent, or the power of universities to manage their reputations, well-funded and well-connected institutions have relied on a lopsided justice system rife with insanely short statutes of limitations, and a culture of shame to protect their interests and silence those who dare speak out and share their story.

The system, by design, favors the powerful. It protects the institutions. I should know. I was raped by my roommate during my sophomore year at Fordham University. As asserted in my complaint, which I filed on June 6 in federal court, my university failed to protect me despite multiple warnings.

Until New York passed the Adult Survivors Act in 2022, I had lost the opportunity to seek justice for an attack that altered the course of my life when I was only 20 years old. I have to live with the consequences of their dereliction of duty for the rest of my life.

Unfortunately, my university's mis-

handling of my case is a perfect example of a wider problem. Historically, universities and colleges have come up short when it comes to handling sexual assaults on their campuses. Even with reporting numbers notoriously lower than reality, a recent study by the Association of American Universities shows that more than one out of ten students will report a nonconsensual sexual encounter as an undergraduate.

And for those who report, now they have to encounter a problematic justice system. Based on the U.S. Department of Justice's own numbers, approximately three rapists will ever serve a day in prison for every 100 rapes committed. That's a 3% conviction rate. Would you report and relive the worst day of your life if you could safely bet that your attacker will walk free?

No student should have to face this kind of decision as they are adjusting to independence and adulthood, and no parent should have to fear that their child's university or college would turn a blind eye to sexual assault.

Until now, there has been little recourse or protection for survivors found in the shadows and left pick up the pieces on their own. Their attackers go free, and the institutions that protected them are able to move on as if nothing ever happened and hide behind incredibly short statute of limitations that protect them from any liability.

Too many powerful people turned a blind eye to the atrocities happening right in front of them. As we continue to grapple with what it means to support survivors of sexual assault, we must do more than simply talk about the problem. Rather, we must start holding institutions accountable for their negligence



FRANK AUSTIN SPEAKING during a prerecorded segment shown during a June 2023 virtual press conference during which the filing of his federal complaint was announced. Screenshot of June 2023 virtual press conference courtesy of Actum LLC

and refuse to allow them to sweep their cover ups under the rug.

But in the aftermath of the #MeToo movement, we have seen positive change. The imbalance of power was brought to light and with it, a national reckoning focused on righting historic wrongs and giving survivors tools, not only to heal from their attacks, but to hold their attackers and those who enabled these assaults accountable in a court of law.

Powerful predators were brought to justice. Institutions like the Catholic Church were held accountable for the staggering decades of child abuse and molestation happening within its own

priesthood.

The Child Victims Act brought unprecedented attention and relief to those who had been victims of a lopsided justice system. Now, until Nov. 23 of this year, the Adult Survivors Act is allowing survivors like me to seek justice. Because the truth remains that there is not much of a difference between a 17-year-old Catholic high school student and an 18-year-old in their first year of college. Institutions of higher education must be responsible for protecting their students.

As you can imagine, the aftermath of these assaults has haunted me. Without any help or acknowledgement from the university for what happened to me, I was left to pick up the pieces on my own. I fell into a deep depression and attempted to take my own life on several occasions. I've sought counseling and I'm so thankful for the support of my friends, family, and husband, but the road to recovery has been long, rocky, and oftentimes lonely.

My university refused to act, and I am the one who must live with the consequences of their inaction every day. My purpose is using my experience and voice to ensure no other student must go through what I have had to endure for the last 12 years of my life, and I am fighting for justice and accountability with every avenue I have available.

Frank Austin graduated from Fordham University in 2013.

Editor's Note: Norwood News contacted Fordham University for comment on both the filed federal complaint and on Mr. Austin's op-ed. A Fordham University representative responded, saying, "The University doesn't comment on litigation in progress." According to filed federal court documents, both the alleged attacker and Fordham University deny any wrongdoing.

Kingsbridge Celebrates as Adams Eyes Revenue from Cricket World Cup on L.I.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Many Kingsbridge residents and environmentalists are celebrating a win following a sustained, community-led campaign, opposing the construction of a temporary 34,000 seat cricket stadium in Van Cortlandt Park (VCP) Parade Ground to host the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Meanwhile, Mayor Eric Adams, who had been optimistic the VCP proposal might have benefited The Bronx, economically, still hopes New York City will garner some of the spin-off revenue generated by the event when it finally kicks off next year in the U.S. and the West Indies, and after the announcement that Nassau County's Long Island, as well as Dallas

and Miami, will host some of the games.

The ICC formally announced the decision that Long Island, rather than The Bronx, was chosen on Sept. 20, as one of the final three host locations for the event. "We're delighted to announce the three USA venues that will host part of the biggest ICC Men's T20 World Cup ever staged, with 20 teams competing for the trophy," an ICC spokesperson said. "The USA is a strategically important market, and these venues give us an excellent opportunity to make a statement in the world's biggest sport market."

As reported, news that Van Cortlandt Park was first being considered as a possible venue for the event was met with both shock and a lot of emotion in



ASSEMBLYMAN JEFFREY DINOWITZ (A.D. 81), City Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15) join Kingsbridge residents and parks advocates in Van Cortlandt Park on Sept. 1 to oppose the building of a temporary 34,000 seat stadium in the park to host the 2024 Cricket World Cup. Photo courtesy of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

July as residents, Bronx Community Board 8 (CB8), Bronx River Park Alliance, and others scrambled to find out more

information about the proposal.

The opposition coalition was strengthened by the sup-

port of local elected officials in the form of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), who held a press conference in the park on Sept. 1 to reiterate the reasons they felt VCP was not the best choice for the project.

Jeffrey Dinowitz said he and his colleagues, along with what he described as a great coalition of community organizations and park advocacy organizations achieved an enormous victory for the community, for Van Cortlandt Park, and parks in general. "Our collective efforts demonstrated the power of community advocacy and the importance of preserving green spaces in urban environ-

(continued on page 8)

NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & MIRIAM QUIÑONES**

Hispanic Heritage Month Kicks Off

Hostos Community College kicked off Hispanic Heritage Month with a discussion on Sept. 20 on “the contributions and rich heritage of Jewish people in the Dominican Republic” led by Dr. Herbert S. Stern Díaz, a renowned Dominican ophthalmologist and historian. At a time when Jewish refugees were turned away worldwide, panelists described how the island stood out as one of the few countries that received them with open arms.

Keeping this in perspective and drawing a parallel with the current migrant crisis, Stern illuminated what was described as the remarkable journey of Jewish communities on the Caribbean island through findings included in his most recent publication, “*Hechos y documentos sobre la presencia judía en República Dominicana*” (“Facts and Documents of the Jewish Presence in the Dominican Republic”).

Local elected officials, Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) and City Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), spoke at the event along with Manhattan Council Member Julie Menin (C.D. 5), who chairs the Council’s Jewish Caucus, Bronx Deputy Borough President Janet Piguero, and Bronx Regional Representative from Gov. Kathy Hochul’s office, Fidel Malena.

List of NYPD Highest Lawsuit Payouts Released

Representatives from The Legal Aid Society released, on Sept. 25, a list of active NYPD members of service of all ranks who the society said “garnered” the highest lawsuit payouts, as well as a list of the named defendants in the most civil rights lawsuits alleging police misconduct from 2013 to July 28,

2023, per City data.

Legal Aid officials said the analysis comes on the back of a report they released earlier this month revealing that the City paid out \$50.5 million in lawsuits alleging police misconduct from Jan. 1 to July 28, 2023. Among the top 11 active members of service of all ranks citywide who were most named in civil lawsuits from 2013 to July 28, 2023 was Det. Daniel Rivera, who out of ten filed Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) complaints had zero substantiated and the pay-out was \$505,501, Det. Abdiel Anderson, who out of four CCRB complaints had zero substantiated and the payout was \$527,500, and Det. Jodi Brown, who out of nine complaints had zero substantiated and the payout was \$1,359,000. Each is assigned to Bronx Narcotics.

Also listed was Det. Wilfredo Benitez with the 44th Precinct, who out of 18 CCRB complaints filed against him had one substantiated and a payout of \$582,500, and Sgt. Edmundo Rivera with the 49th Precinct who out of 14 filed CCRB complaints had three substantiated and a payout of \$683,000. All referenced employees are male and Hispanic, apart from Brown who is Black.

Among the top ten active members of service (all ranks, citywide) with the highest total payout amounts from 2013 to July 28, 2023, was Sgt. Jeffrey Griffin with the 52nd Precinct, listed as male and White, who had six CCRB complaints filed against him with one substantiated, and the payout was \$8,210,000.

Norwood News contacted the NYPD for comment on the lists. We did not receive an immediate response. We also contacted the CCRB and asked why there was a payout in relation to those complaints which were not substantiated. We were referred to the City’s law department and asked the same question. A law department spokesperson said, “Cases can have multiple defendants, including the City, and other City officials. After a thorough review of the merits of the individual claims in each case, settlements are made in the best interest of the parties.”

McDonald’s at 372 Fordham Road Closed

The McDonald’s branch located at 372 East Fordham Road in Fordham Manor has closed. The branch had its gates

down at 3.30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 18, though on the top floor, the lights were still on. A sign on the door advised customers that the branch was permanently closed and directed them to the branch at 36 West Fordham Road.

Norwood News contacted the press office for McDonalds to ask for the reason for the closure, further to a request from a resident. Despite chasing, we did not receive a response. Two teenagers were about to enter the closed branch on Sept. 18 but once they read the sign, they departed and said there was no way they were going to go to the other branch. Another woman said she was glad it had closed down because too many “homeless” people and “weird” people used to sleep there.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones
MCDONALDS AT 372 East Fordham Road has closed.

Biden-Harris Appointee Troy Blackwell Named Senior Adviser

Former candidate in 2021 for city council in The Bronx’s Council District 15, Troy Blackwell has been named senior adviser of the newly created office of enterprise integration at the Selective Service System (SSS), an independent U.S. agency that maintains information on U.S. citizens and other U.S. residents potentially subject to military conscription.

Blackwell said he will be the first person to lead the new office while on detailed assignment from his PR role at his home agency Peace Corps. At the Peace Corps, Blackwell said he was the principal point of contact with news media in over 64 countries and the first openly LGBTQ person on record to be appointed spokesperson for the agency in its 62-

year history.

In his new role, Blackwell said he will advise on issues concerning communications workflows, strategic planning, organizational performance, policy implementation, and presidential transition.

Blackwell said by registering for the selective service, young men aged 18 to 25 remain eligible for jobs, state-based student aid in 31 states, federally funded job training, as well as U.S. citizenship for immigrant young men. In response to a question on this description, Blackwell said, “As of right now, congressional legislation only requires men (those assigned male at birth) ages 18-25 to register with the Selective Service.”

Most recently, Blackwell served on assignment as a communications detail for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Before joining President Biden’s administration, he previously worked on the Biden-Harris 2020 campaign. Blackwell is a graduate of CUNY-City College of New York and is finishing his master’s degree at Columbia University.

“I am thrilled to continue to support the Biden-Harris administration as I head up the newly created Office of Enterprise Integration,” said Blackwell. “With approximately 130 full-time employees, 175 Reserve Service Members (RSMs), and 56 part-time state directors, the SSS is our nation’s best insurance policy.”



Photo courtesy of Troy Blackwell
TROY BLACKWELL

Weapon, Cocaine Seized & 5 Arrested in Business Raids

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Cocaine and a weapon were seized and five people were arrested following a second round of targeted raids by law enforcement of businesses in Assembly District 80 on Monday, Sept. 18. Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr. said the New York County Sheriff’s office conducted the raids on businesses located along White Plains Road in Pelham Parkway, suspected of illegally selling tobacco and cannabis products.

The assemblyman said the second round of raids to take place in A.D. 80 in recent weeks targeted the Pelham Bay Convenience Corporation at 2180

White Plains Road and Hookah Zone Convenience Inc. at 634 Morris Park Avenue. Assembly District 80 covers some or all of the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Morris Park, Van Nest, Pelham Parkway, Pelham Gardens, and Allerton, Indian Village, and Little Yermen.

Zaccaro Jr. said of the operation, “Over the past few months, my office has been contacted by concerned constituents offering invaluable tips about how these businesses have been circumventing the law.” He added, “The information gathered was quickly turned over to the

(continued on page 14)



Photo courtesy of the Office of Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr.

THE NEW YORK County Sheriff’s office conducts a targeted raid on one of two businesses on White Plains Road in Pelham Parkway suspected of illegally selling tobacco and cannabis products on Monday, Sept. 18, 2023.



Letters To The Editor

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

OMNY Cards and Fare Evasion

Larry Penner states in his letter to the editor [*Norwood News*, Aug. 10-Sept. 13, 2023] that the MTA has never made public any detailed recovery schedule from the [OMNY] contractor. Has Mr. Penner tried submitting a Freedom of Information request to the MTA? Any "ordinary" (Mr. Penner's word) citizen, for the price of a postage stamp or the electricity, can make an online request. If Mr. Penner had made one and it has not been answered, this would give him the right to complain.

Mr. Penner states that neither Gov. Kathy Hochul nor MTA CEO Janno Lieber can explain how OMNY can end fare evasion. Fare evasion is committed by going over or under turnstiles, through exit gates, walking past a bus driver or boarding the back of a bus without paying. The problem, as I'm reading it, is a lack of enforcement. (I'm making no comment as to whether this is or isn't the case). How in the name of common sense can OMNY stop fare evasion?

Mr. Penner further laments that OMNY cannot be used on PATH, NJ Transit, or EDC Ferry. These are separate transit systems, run by different authorities. It would be as if one were to complain about Macy's not accepting a JC Penney card. Mr. Penner is already lamenting how inefficient the [OMNY] contractor is. Is he really in favor of expanding the bailiwick of an inefficient

contractor?

Why is Lieber's announcement of the billionth rider to use OMNY premature? Have one billion riders used it? If so, what is premature? Although I prefer MetroCard, I have used OMNY; it works. Sometimes it's a bit balky and you have to tap twice. If OMNY is online and it mostly works, what is Mr. Penner's issue?

**Nat Weiner
Parkchester**

Purr-fect Companions

Excellent letter about stray cats from Frank Sterle Jr. [*Norwood News*, Sept. 14-Sept. 27, 2023]. Let me add that my current, super affectionate tabby makes my life much better. Five other cats in the past have brought great joy to my life. The only exception was one cat who became violent, twice attacking me and drawing blood, and attacking my current cat to the point that he

was afraid to go near her. She had to be euthanized. But I'd say that six out of seven cats being wonderful is a track record that I'm sure would not be matched if I had taken in seven homeless humans.

**Richard Warren,
Van Cortlandt Village**

MTA Funding of Repairs

The recent incident of 97 NYC Transit subway car windows smashed across 45 different trains on the B, D, F, N, Q and W lines raises more questions for MTA

Chairman Janno Lieber and NYC Transit President Richard Davey. NYC Transit maintained they didn't have enough spare windows in stock to quickly make all the repairs. Was there any attempt to uncouple the damaged cars from trains, leaving the remaining cars to form new 8 or 10-car train sets? Why did NYC Transit not have enough spare cars and train sets to replace those taken out of service?

The NYC Transit Fleet Management Plan would tell us how many spare cars and train sets were available. Does NYC Transit need to expand its spare fleet of cars and trains to deal with periodic crises like these in the future? Perhaps instead of disposing of all the old cars with new vehicles, those in better condition should be added to the spare fleet. Commuters, taxpayers, elected officials and transit advocates deserve answers to these very valid questions.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Follow-Up on Fines Imposed on Convicted Bronx Politicians

The editor of the *Norwood News* did a wonderful job outlining the fines outstanding for some convicted Bronx politicians in a previous issue of the *Norwood News* [Aug. 10-Sept. 13, 2023] per my letter request. So many of my fellow Norwoodites were looking forward to Ms. Moloney's follow-up on the matter. Alas, it was not to be! There was no mention of a follow-up. We were all so disappointed during our morning coffee gathering. Could Ms. Moloney provide some type of reporting that this subject mat-

ter of unpaid fines of Bronx politicians is indeed being followed up on?

**Richard Marias
Norwood**

Editor's Note: Further to the updates shared by Norwood News [Aug. 10-Sept. 14, 2023] on Mr. Marias's original inquiries relating to fines paid, sentences served, and the status of pensions for former State Sen. Efrain Gonzalez (S.D. 33), former District 12 City Councilman Larry Seabrook, former District 12 City Councilman Andy King, and Bronx-born union boss, Norman Seabrook, we have followed up with the Unified Court System for the Southern District of New York, the OSC State Comptroller's office, and the New York City Council Ethics/Investigations committee for feedback on the various points raised. OSC and the City Council said they are investigating. We did not receive other responses

To ensure sufficient time for review of all letters to the editor, please send them, along with supporting sources, 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 on local issues or in response to published articles. We do not publish op-eds from political candidates or from elected officials [with some exceptions for health-related matters]. Thank you for reading and for your continued support.

Kingsbridge Celebrates as Adams Eyes Revenue from Cricket World Cup on L.I.

(continued from page 6)

ments," he said in part.

"Van Cortlandt Park has long been a haven for outdoor enthusiasts and a symbol of community unity," he continued. "By ensuring the protection of the Parade Ground, we guarantee that this historic park will continue to offer diverse recreational opportunities and remain a beacon of environmental stewardship. I have long been committed to enhancing and safeguarding the best park in New York City."

According to draft plans, it was envisaged to close off the southeast corner of Van Cortlandt Parade Ground from January 2024 until the end of the tournament, restricting residents' access to the park to play sports or simply hang

out. In addition, the construction of an expected fan zone, food and beverage stands, batting cages, a stage for performances, a broadcast area, and all elements needed for a major sporting event was anticipated to severely impact upon parking in the local area.

According to Bronx CB8, the event was also expected to preclude the scheduling of the annual Philharmonic concert in the park, which usually draws around 7,000 attendees, and there were similar uncertainties around the Manhattan College invitational, which usually draws around 10,000 attendees. Environmental concerns, the impact on the African Burial Ground site located in the park, and access to various greenways were other factors cited by those opposing

the project.

Torres agreed the final decision was a major win for The Bronx. "From the onset, this project suffered from an enormous lack of meaningful community engagement, would have severely limited the public's access in favor of a private event, and stood to cause significant, long-term damage to the historic grounds."

Describing Van Cortlandt Park as a crown jewel of the borough and one of the greatest parks in New York City, he said it must be protected for future generations to use and enjoy. He thanked the coalition for standing up to say the park would not be treated as just a piece of real estate for sale to the highest bidder. "Together, we sent a powerful message that Van Cortlandt Park be-

longs to the people," he said.

For his part, the councilman said in part, "I am thrilled that our steadfast coalition of elected, and community leaders stopped this outrageous proposal in its tracks and prevailed in protecting our cherished Van Cortlandt Park. With no community input, a private organization would have removed access to our public green space for months on end, while inflicting untold damage on our city's third largest park, which is beloved by the local community, tourists, athletes, and everyday park goers."

When contacted for comment, a City Hall spokesperson congratulated Nassau County on its selection as a host for the event. "New York City put forward a competitive bid reflective of the diversity

of our city and the countless immigrant communities who call it home, and we appreciate their support," the spokesperson said.

He added, "While we were hopeful that New York City would be selected, we invite attendees to stay in New York City hotels and to enjoy the incredible entertainment, cultural organizations, restaurants, and other attractions that make New York City the best destination for major events and visitors from around the world and that create economic opportunities for the hard-working New Yorkers who make our city run."

Following news of the announcement, Kingsbridge residents gathered in the park on Friday, Sept. 22, to celebrate.

Eight Injured in 2 Chain-Reaction Collisions

By DAVID GREENE

Three people, including two children, were injured after a five-vehicle, chain-reaction crash took place along Sedgwick Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights,

City officials said. FDNY spokesperson, Jim Long, who oversees EMS, said the crash was reported outside 2559 Sedgwick Avenue, between West Kingsbridge Road and Bailey Avenue at 1:37 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 20.

Long said paramedics treated three people at the scene, with one victim declining further medical attention. They said two patients were transported to St. Barnabas Hospital. Long was unable to provide any further information on the patients or their conditions.

Meanwhile, a police spokesperson told *Norwood News*, “Police responded to a vehicle accident at 2559 Sedgwick Avenue. Upon arrival, it was reported to police that a 2012 Toyota was traveling eastbound on Sedgwick Avenue when it sideswiped a 2017 Honda.”

The spokesperson said the force of the impact pushed the 2017 Honda into a 2017 Hyundai, which in turn was pushed



Photo by David Greene

POLICE INVESTIGATE A 5-vehicle, chain-reaction crash on Sedgwick Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights on Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023.

into the front bumper of a 2016 Subaru. A 2012 Honda and a 2015 Toyota also suffered damage.

Police said a 5-year-old girl and a 2-year-old girl were transported to St. Barnabas Hospital in “stable” condition.

Police were unable to immediately confirm if any arrests or traffic summonses had been issued.

On Sunday, Sept. 24, a resident of the block who declined to be identified, said, “I didn’t see it (the crash) but I came out

and saw the stuff on the floor.... just headlight pieces, the tail-light pieces, bumper pieces, stuff like that.”

When told of the two children who were injured, the young man responded, “I didn’t hear that; that sucks.” The resident said despite the existence of a speed camera at West Kingsbridge Road which records traffic driving eastbound on Sedgwick Avenue, and a curve in the middle of the block which is the site of several crashes, motorists continue to regularly speed towards Bailey Avenue.

Meanwhile, an 8-vehicle crash was reported at Van Cortlandt Park South and Orloff Avenue at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 21. The FDNY said the second, multiple-vehicle crash took place at 12.13 p.m. and five aided people were treated at the scene. They said two of the victims declined further medical treatment, two were transported to Montefiore Hospital, and one was taken to Presbyterian Hospital’s Allen Pavilion. Their conditions were not immediately known.

When contacted about the second incident, a police spokesperson said at the time, “There is nothing on file with the information provided.”

52nd Precinct Hosts Open Day

By SÍLE MOLONEY

As is an annual tradition, the 52nd Precinct once again hosted an Open Day over the summer on the stationhouse grounds, located on Webster Avenue in Norwood, to welcome residents and foster police-community relations.

About 50 to 60 people, including kids, attended and were treated to a barbecue,

some fun games, and also had the opportunity to play with one of the precinct’s [K9] dogs. [The precinct’s cat, Meesh, 2009-2023, is recently deceased, as indicated by a recently erected headstone on the precinct grounds.]

Some kids were seen playing inside a squad car on the day, happily giving instructions over the vehicle’s communications system, and flashing and sounding a lowish level siren.

There was also tabling by the Precinct’s community affairs team, led by Officer Stephen Echevarria, where families and other residents were able to obtain information on matters ranging from domestic violence to vehicle security.

Details of the next 52nd Precinct Community Council meeting are listed on page 14. Visit <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/bureaus/patrol/precincts/52nd-precinct.page>, for more information on how the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs team.

Photos by Síle Moloney

KIDS AND ADULTS attend the 52nd Precinct’s Open Day held on June 23, 2023, at the 52nd Precinct on Webster Avenue in Norwood.



CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



University Heights: Four Sought in Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos above who they say are sought in connection to a robbery that occurred in University Heights. Police said that on Wednesday, Sept. 6, at around 1.42 p.m. in front of 2254 Davidson Avenue, four males approached a 39-year-old victim and a physical altercation ensued.

"The individuals dragged the victim down the stairs and forcefully removed approximately \$1,500 cash," a police spokesperson said. "The victim sustained minor injuries and refused medical treatment. The individuals then fled on foot towards West 183rd Street to parts unknown."

Police said three of the people sought are described as male, each with a dark complexion, and each was last seen wearing white t-shirts. They said the fourth person is also described as male and has a light complexion.



Fordham Manor: Two Sought in Armed Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo above who police say are sought in connection with a robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Friday, Sept. 22, at around 11.05 a.m., a 29-year-old male victim was walking in the vicinity of Fordham Hill Oval and Webb Avenue. They said he was approached by two people unknown to him, riding on a moped.

"Acting in concert, the individuals displayed a firearm and stole the victim's two gold chains," a police spokesperson said. "The individuals then fled on the moped traveling eastbound on Webb Avenue." Police said the victim was uninjured.

They described the first person sought as male who is between 5 feet, 8 inches and 5 feet, 10 inches tall, has a dark complexion, a slim build, and was last seen wearing a black mask, a black, hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, and black sneakers. They said the second person sought is also described as male, is estimated to be between 5 feet, 8 inches and 5 feet, 10 inches tall, has a dark complexion, and a slim build. They said he was last seen wearing a black mask, a black hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, and red sneakers. The two-wheel moped was described as dark colored.



Norwood: Man, 61, Assaulted, Robbed

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is wanted in connection to a robbery and assault that occurred inside 250 East Gun Hill Road in Norwood.

Police said that on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at around 12.40 p.m., the unidentified man got into a dispute with another man, 61. They said the suspect kicked the 61-year-old and stole a package from him before fleeing on foot to parts unknown. Police said the victim refused medical attention at the scene.

Kingsbridge Heights: Man Sought in Non-Fatal Shooting

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo, obtained from

the incident location, who they said is wanted in connection with a shooting that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. They said that on Tuesday, Sept. 5, at around 4.20 a.m., in front 3340 Bailey Avenue, the person fired multiple rounds toward an unknown, intended target, striking three parked and unoccupied vehicles at the location.

"The individual then fled into 3340 Bailey Avenue and took the elevator to the 8th floor," a police spokesperson said, adding that no injuries were reported. The person sought is described by police as male, is around 5 feet, 4 inches tall, weighs around 140 pounds, has a dark complexion, a slim build and long, black hair styled in locks. They said he was last seen wearing a red, hooded jacket, black pants, and blue sandals.



Fordham Heights Man Gets 13 Years for Killing Teen

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Sept. 11, that a Bronx man was sentenced to 13 years in prison for a gang-related shooting that killed a 17-year-old boy in a crowd that had gathered for the filming of a rap music video in a Bronx McDonald's parking lot in 2021.

Clark said the defendant, Luis Cruz, 21, of East 183rd Street in Fordham Heights was sentenced to 13 years in prison and five years post-release supervision by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Ralph Fabrizio. He pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter on May 30.

According to the investigation, on May 15, 2021, at about 9 p.m., Cruz, then 18, and a member of the ATR Trinitarios gang, exchanged gunfire with an opposition gang, the Shooting Boys, in the McDonald's restaurant parking lot at Clay Avenue and Belmont Street in Claremont, where a crowd had gathered for the rap music video shoot. Cruz fired a single shot from a .380-caliber pistol and Armanis Valdez, 17, was shot in the chest and died.

Throggs Neck: Armed Robbery Results in Police-Involved Fatal Shooting

A man armed with a kitchen knife, described by the NYPD as being in his thirties and Black, has died after he was

shot by a police officer during an altercation inside a 7-Eleven convenience store in Throggs Neck on Friday, Sept. 8. Prefacing that the information provided was preliminary and subject to change, police said that at 2:30 p.m., uniformed officers responded to requests for help from a walk-in complainant at the 45th Precinct.

After investigating, they said that at 2:10 p.m., two employees had been working at the store, located at 3508 East Tremont Avenue, when a man entered it. They said the man repeatedly walked from the back of the store to the front of the store for around 20 minutes, approaching the counter every time a customer left the location.

They said one of the employees then exited the store to meet with a relative, and when that employee was returning, she saw the suspect behind the counter with the other employee who looked very nervous. Police said the employee who was still outside immediately went to the nearby 45th Precinct and alerted security standing outside of what she had seen.

Police said two officers walked to the store with the employee, entered it and based on the description they were given, observed the suspect at the rear of the store by the coffee machines. They said as the officers approached, one gave several commands to the suspect to take his hands out of his sweatshirt pocket.

They said as the officer gave the commands, the suspect then advanced on the officer revealing a knife in his hand. They said the suspect then began advancing with a kitchen knife and lunged at the officer who continued giving verbal commands to him. They said that officer then took out his gun, attempted to retreat backwards, and fired one time, striking the suspect in the chest. They said both officers, one of whom is a trained EMT, then immediately rendered first aid to the suspect.

Police went on to say that the officers also called for EMS and the suspect was removed to Jacobi Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased at 3:14 p.m. They said the officers were also removed to a local area hospital, and that the sequence of events was put together based on body-worn camera, video at the location, and witness accounts. Police shared a photo of what was described as a large kitchen knife which they said was recovered at the scene, and added that no words were spoken by the suspect during the incident. When asked if the suspect was still lunging at the officer as he attempted to retreat, police said he was. They said the victim lives in The Bronx.

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

Bedford Park: FF Injured, 8 Others Displaced in Fire

By **DAVID GREENE**

FDNY officials said one firefighter and two civilians suffered minor injuries after a fire broke out on the top floor of a three-family home in Bedford Park.

They said they received the call at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 20, for reports of a fire on the third floor of the home, located at 216 East 201st Street, and that 60 FDNY and EMS personnel, comprising 12 units responded to the blaze.

According to the fire department, the two civilians who suffered minor injuries refused medical attention. FDNY officials said one firefighter who also suffered minor injuries was transported to Jacobi Medical Center in Morris Park.

An FDNY spokesperson told **Norwood News** the fire was brought under control at 7.32 a.m., and that the cause has not yet been determined.

Hours after the blaze, the unidentified owner of the home

was observed speaking with displaced residents, neighbors, and a work crew who he explained he had brought in to repair the building. The owner said the entire home was damaged from both the fire and the water used to extinguish the flames, adding, "The fire department did more damage."

Asked about injuries, the owner told **Norwood News**, "No, nobody was injured." Gesturing to an ambulance, he said, "The lady went in there after the fire because of all the smoke went in her lungs, but nobody was injured."

Asked how the fire began, the owner said, "The guy was drunk. He lit the cigarette and he set the mattress on fire and that's the way it started." The owner, who's lived in the home for more than two decades, said eight people including his own family were displaced. Asked if he would rebuild, the owner replied, "Yeah."



Photo by David Greene

THE OWNER OF a home at 216 East 201st Street in Bedford Park said eight residents were displaced after an early morning fire broke out on Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023.

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Marisol Pascasio

at

917-801-2513

Or

mpascasio@concoursehouse.org



NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



General Election Key Dates

The next general election takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 7. The deadline for voter registration, updating your address, and requesting an absentee ballot (online or by mail) is Monday, Oct. 23. Early voting runs from Saturday, Oct. 28, through Sunday, Nov. 5. Register to vote at <https://nycvotes.turbovote.org/>. To find your early voting or Election Day voting site, visit <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>.

Safe Disposal Event

NYC Department of Sanitation is hosting an event to allow residents to safely dispose of electronics, solvents, flammables and automobiles on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Orchard Beach Parking lot. Visit nyc.gov/safedisposal for more information.

6th Annual 5K Walk/Roll/Run to End Domestic Violence

The Office of the Bronx District Attorney will be holding the 6th Annual 5K Walk/Roll/Run to End Domestic Violence on Saturday, Oct. 7, at 9.30 a.m. at 161st Street between Grand Concourse and Walton Avenue. All are welcome to this free event. Register at <https://forms.office.com/g/KtFdkfJbtE>.

Mosholu Mastery Learning Academy

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) is launching the Mosholu Mastery Learning Academy, offering individualized learning for K-8 students and high school SAT/ACT preparation. MMCC representatives say this low-cost plan will improve your child's reading and math scores and abilities. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3kBdpBM>.

Two More "HPD in Your District" Sessions in District 11

Council Member Eric Dinowitz (A.D. 81) is hosting two more "HPD in Your District" sessions with representatives from NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD). Learn more about housing related issues, including help with applying for affordable housing, understanding your rights and responsibilities, help with financing improvements and repairs, and more. The next session will be on Thursday, Oct. 5, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at East 241st Street and White Plains Road, Bronx, NY 10470, and the following one will be on Tuesday, Oct. 17, at the same time at 98 Van Cortlandt Park South, Bronx, NY 10463.

Applications Open for Bronx Museum Teen Council Internship

The Bronx Museum is seeking teens aged 14 to 19 for a three-month paid in-

ternship. Explore the arts, be part of a museum, collaborate with your peers, and improve your resume. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, Oct. 4, at 11.59 p.m. Visit <https://bronxmuseum.wufoo.com/forms/z1r897me02oe4ua/> for more information.

Community Engagement Grants

Bronx Council of the Arts is advising residents that the 2024 Community Engagement Grants (CEG) application cycle is open. Bronx-based artists, collectives, and arts organizations have the opportunity to apply for New Work, Arts Fund, and Community Arts for a total of up to \$10,000 in grants. Applications are due Tuesday, Oct. 31 at 11.59 p.m. Visit www.eventbrite.com and search for 2024 Community Engagement Grants (CEG) for more information.

Pillar of the Community Award Nominations

New York City Mayor, Eric L. Adams says the wisdom, history, commitment, and passion that so many of our residents exhibit and extend to their neighbors makes them pillars of their communities and city. It is in this spirit that Adams wishes to honor residents who have lived on the block, resided in buildings, served in a civic organization the longest. He is requesting residents to join him as he travels throughout the City to pay tribute to these pillars of the

communities. Nominate a block association, civic association, homeowners association, tenant association or other here: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cau/Initiatives/mayor-adams-neighborhood-awards.page>.

Free Flu Shots

Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15), Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), and Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) are hosting a free flu shot event on Thursday, Oct. 5, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Gabriel's Church (Walsh Rectory), 3250 Arlington Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463. Register at Dinowitz.us/flu. You can also call (718) 796 5345 or email Dinowitzj@nyassembly.gov for more information. There is a limited dose supply. Facemasks are encouraged.

Affordable Housing Lottery

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) launched various affordable housing lotteries for units at 1325 Southern Boulevard in Charlotte Gardens with a closing date of Oct. 2, at 40 Bruckner Boulevard in Mott Haven with a closing date of Oct. 30, at 3073 Barker Avenue Apartments with a closing date of Oct 16, and at eight other Bronx locations, including at 2042 Grand Avenue and at 1982 University Avenue with a closing date of Oct. 2. Visit www.norwoodnews.org, and search for "affordable housing" for more information.

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Bedford Park: NYPD Search for Missing Girl, 16

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating a 16-year-old girl from Bedford Park, reported missing on Saturday, Sept. 23. Police said Madison Miranda of 2871 Webster Avenue was last seen leaving her home on Sept. 23 at around 11 a.m. They said she is around 5 feet, 5 inches tall, weighs 118 pounds, has brown hair in braids, brown eyes, and was last seen wearing a black sweatshirt and tan khaki pants.

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



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

THE NYPD IS asking for the public's help locating a 16-year-old girl from Bedford Park, reported missing on Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

October is **Italian American Heritage Month!** Recognize the contributions and achievements of Italian Americans at Woodlawn's Italian American Heritage Trolley Tour which will take you to the famous Italian Americans interred at Woodlawn on October 8 at noon.

Visit magnificent monuments from the family of renowned marble carvers the Piccirilli Brothers, the mausoleum of visionary Futurist artist Joseph Stella, celebrated for his depictions of the Brooklyn Bridge and Coney Island, and the gravesite of one of New York's most beloved and colorful leaders, Fiorello La Guardia. The Trolley Tour will be led by architectural historian and dedicated Woodlawn volunteer Anthony Pellino. To purchase tickets, visit <https://www.woodlawn.org/>, click on Conservancy, and then Tours & Events.

Enjoy some family fun at **Pumpkin Nights at the Bronx Zoo**, an all-

new, night-time family Halloween event, which takes place on Thursdays and Sundays from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. from Sept. 28 to Oct. 29. Follow an animal-themed illuminated jack o'lantern trail and learn about animal behavior after dark, plus enjoy games and treats. [This event does not include animal exhibits, which are closed at the end of daytime park hours.] For more information, visit <https://bronxzoo.com/pumpkin-nights>.

FOOD

Bronx Night Market is holding a special celebration on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 1 p.m. at Fordham Plaza. **"Bronxtoberfest"** will feature food vendors, incredible performances, The Bronx is Reading, Me Zone by Montefiore, special games, and prizes! Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bronx-night-market-tickets-472823877947?aff=oddtcreator>.

MUSIC

Watch a screening of the movie **"Coco" with a full live orchestra** at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, Bronx, New York 10468 on Sunday, Oct. 8, at 4 p.m. Visit <https://www.>

lehmancenter.org/events/coco-in-concert for more information.

KIDS

Van Cortlandt Public Library, located at 3882 Cannon Place, Bronx, NY 10463, has weekly art programs, including the **Kids Coloring Club**, Doodle Doodle Doo, and Crafternoon. Meanwhile, the first-floor programming room hosts the **Kids Anime Club**, screening anime shows for all ages with free snacks and fun coloring pages provided for all attendees. There are also story-time and read aloud sessions, songs, rhymes, and other fun sessions for the whole family. In addition, there are weekly, educational **STEAM activities** for school-aged children. Email VANCORTLANDT@NYPL.ORG or call (718) 543-5150 for more information.

Bronx River Arts Center (BRAC), 1087 East Tremont Ave, PO Box 5002, Bronx, NY 10460, **Open House & Registration Day** takes place on Saturday, Sept. 30, from noon to 5 p.m. There will be free art activities for the entire family, a tour of the studios, art activities, community painting, art sales, snacks, printmaking, giveaways, a Latin music & piano session, and

fine arts, ceramics & computer lab tours.

FILM

Join The Bronx Museum of the Arts, located at 1040 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, NY 10456, on Thursday, Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. for a free screening of **"Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project."** directed by Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson (2023), in partnership with the 61st New York Film Festival. Winner of the Grand Jury Prize in the Sundance U.S. Documentary Competition, this beguiling documentary portrait follows poet and activist Nikki Giovanni as she approaches 80. The film explores Giovanni's Afrofuturist-feminist philosophical outlook as well as her poignant relationship with her family, her political audacity, and her poetic eloquence, all knit together with a constant eye and ear for its subject's own aesthetic verve. Free registration is required; walk-ins will be accommodated if capacity allows. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/film-screening-going-to-mars-the-nikki-giovanni-project-tickets-719950510357?aff=oddtcreator>.

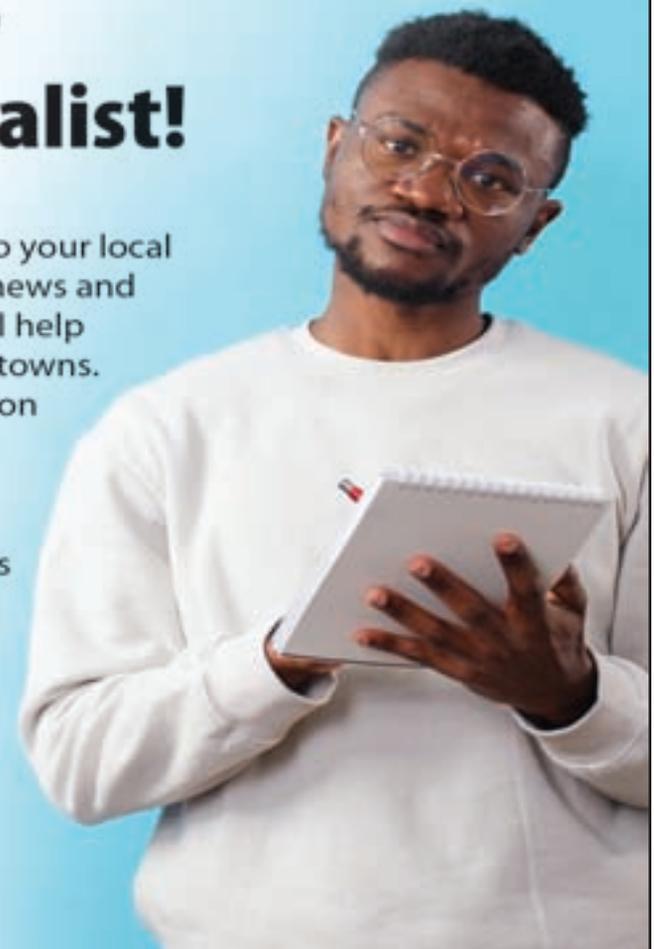
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The four-part online program will focus on journalism basics such as ethics, accuracy in reporting, interviewing techniques and writing clearly.

To earn certification, participants must complete all four sessions and pass a written test.

The online training will be offered two 90-minute sessions; October 17th and 18th from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. To register, contact judy@nynewspapers.com.





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Public and Community Meetings

The next 52nd **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, Sept. 28, at 7 p.m. at the Plaza Rehab and Nursing Center, 100 West Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10468. 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 in October (date and location tbc). Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board meeting will be held in October. Contact BX08@cb.nyc.gov for more details and to be added to the distribution list.

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

CORRECTION

In the *Norwood News* edition August 10 to September 13, 2023, on page 16 of the story entitled, "Dinowitz Shares Highlights of \$30M+ for City Council District 11," in the last paragraph of the right-hand column, it was incorrectly reported that Councilman Eric Dinowitz said that as part of the city budget discussions, the mayor had proposed a 3 percent cut to the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles] and CUNY [City University of New York], and a 4 percent cut to all other agencies.

In fact, the councilman said that as part of the city budget discussions, the mayor had proposed a 3 percent cut to the *DOE* [NYC Department of Education] and CUNY, and a 4 percent cut to all other agencies. We apologize for this error.

Weapon, Cocaine Seized & 5 Arrested in Business Raids

(continued from page 7)

Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) and the New York County Sheriff's office for further investigation."

He said the round of inspections resulted in five arrests, criminal possession of a weapon, four notice of violations with 21 violations and 135 counts of violations, an estimated \$153,600 in penalties, and criminal possession of a controlled substance (cocaine).

Seized products from the most current round of inspections included flavored vape products, packages of THC flower weighing 31.46 pounds, THC pre-

rolls weighing a total of 8.45 pounds, THC edibles weighing a total of 46.07 pounds, mushroom products including chocolate bars and liquid containers with other hallucinogenic ingredients, and packages of other tobacco products.

The assemblyman thanked the New York County Sheriff's Office for what he described as their "dedication" and "incredible work," along with the constituents who had reached out to him. Zaccaro Jr. concluded, "These raids are a testament to the positive outcomes produced when elected representatives, residents, and community organizations work hand in hand. Together, we'll continue to demonstrate our iron sense of purpose: making our community a safe place for all." The first raid was carried out on Sept. 14 across Allerton and three locations were found to be in violation of the law.



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Will Baby Nicholas Save Others?

(continued from page 1)

focus on Sept. 27 when City officials announced that a second homebased, daycare center, this time located in northern Manhattan, was raided by law enforcement, three people were arrested, and a stash of ghost guns, and a ghost gun 3-D printing machine were seized.

Vasan said Sept. 15 had been his worst experience to date as health commissioner or in any former role. In reference to witnessing the pain experienced by Nicholas's parents following the death of their infant son, he said, "I've seen people die.

I've accompanied people through their end of life in hospital settings, and this is where fentanyl belongs."

The health commissioner said it *didn't* belong on the streets, in homes, or anywhere where trained clinicians were not present. "And it doesn't belong in forms like powders and aerosolized liquids," he said. "It belongs in syringes, and it belongs in hospitals, where [it is] extremely controlled."

Police said they were originally alerted to the Bronx daycare situation at 2.41 p.m. on Sept. 15 when officers responded to a 911 call regarding multiple aided children inside 2707 Morris Avenue.

They said three children, including Nicholas, all under the age of three, were rushed to Montefiore Medical Center, where Nicholas was later pronounced deceased. They said a fourth infant who had been at the same daycare center earlier that day, and who had been picked up by his mother, was also hospitalized the same day.

Police confirmed all four babies were found to have had traces of opioids in their system and all four were administered Narcan, a potentially lifesaving medication designed to help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose in minutes. "We probably saved the lives of three of those children because of Narcan," Mayor Eric Adams later said of the incident.

He continued, in part, "This story could not be just another day in our City. Four babies, four babies and whoever is a parent, you had to see that picture of that young baby who lost his life to just reckless and careless... and total disregard for those children."

The mayor commended the EMS responders who he said identified the symptoms the babies were experiencing and quickly took appropriate action, as well as the police for what he said was their thorough investigation into the incident.

An EMS spokesperson told *Norwood*



(L TO R) NYPD POLICE COMMISSIONER Edward Caban, Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan, Mayor Eric Adams, and another police official hold a press conference at One Police Plaza in Manhattan on Monday, Sept. 18, 2023, to provide an update on two Bronx crimes. Vasan displays and talks about the importance of Narcan kits.

News EMS officials were alerted at 2.42 p.m. on Sept. 15 to the emergency at Divino Niño Daycare Center for a report of a cardiac arrest. Police later said the three surviving infants are now doing ok.

The NYPD immediately launched a criminal investigation into the incident. Carlisto Acevedo Brito, 41, of 2705 Morris Avenue in The Bronx and Grei Mendez, 36, a mother and caretaker of the daycare center, also of 2705 Morris Avenue, were arrested on Sept. 16 at around 8 p.m. and have been indicted on murder, attempted murder, and other charges.

They were also hit with federal drug trafficking charges on Sept. 19. Federal prosecutors allege they stored distribution quantities of fentanyl and narcotics packaging equipment in the daycare, including a kilogram of fentanyl on top of the children's playmats. Law enforcement said they found drugs and related equipment under a trap floor in the daycare center.

Federal prosecutors later said Renny Antonio Parra Paredes, 38, was also arrested, also on federal drug-related charges, and that a fourth unidentified "person of interest" was subsequently taken into custody in Mexico. Charges weren't specified.

Vasan said the daycare center had opened in January 2023 and had been inspected twice by health officials prior to receiving its license and opening, and again as a "surprise" visit in September. He said searching for drugs did not form part of his department's regular inspections, but it may in the future.

At a later press conference, holding up a photo of a plastic pouch with a very small amount of fentanyl inside next to an image of a coin, in order to show its comparative size, Adams said, "Just a small amount, that little corner right there, the size of a penny, that little corner you see here is enough to kill an adult... that little corner!"

The mayor continued, "So, if you're bringing fentanyl in your home, landing it on the countertop, landing it on the

place your child sleeps, landing it near a crib, landing it on your clothing, that little corner, that little piece, less than the size of a fingernail, a tenth of a size of a fingernail, can kill an adult, so imagine what it can do to a child."

Norwood News spoke to one female witness, a young resident of the neighborhood on Sept. 15. Of Mendez, the daycare center owner, who she estimated was in her late thirties, she said she was "very family oriented." She continued, "I never even seen her smoking. She's calm."

We asked the neighbor if she had been present when the ambulances arrived, and she confirmed she had been. "I thought it was her [the owner's] kid 'cause she was, like, screaming, literally," she said. "We all came outside thinking something was happening. There must have been an ambulance truck there.. you know like the ones that pick up the elderly? They got lucky, right?" "They gave the first child CPR. While she was coming out with one of the babies, I don't know which one, she was like, 'Help, help!'"

She continued, "The ambulance probably saved the first baby, but that baby was very lifeless and then she [the owner] came out with another baby and that baby was good. The baby was like even smiling and everything. I don't understand how that happened. She's usually very attentive, you know? For her to even catch that, you can even see that she's very attentive. No, no, there's no way! I don't believe what they're [other

neighbors] saying [regarding suspected drugs on-site]."

The neighbor said the owner's husband worked and had a truck and that as far as she knew, they had two small children and that it hadn't been the owner's children who had been impacted by the incident.

She said another female neighbor who knows the center's owner had entered the daycare on the day of the incident and they both started to bring the other babies out. "Everyone was trying to help," the neighbor said. "I never seen this community so put together like."

Asked if she knew any of the parents whose kids were left at the center, the neighbor said, "I know one of the parents of the twins. She was definitely devastated. She was on her way back and she ran towards her child, I guess. I just seen I don't know which baby.. I don't know if it was the twin but the baby looked like a doll. Like, it was just lifeless."

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) provides training and regularly updated information on how to obtain and administer naloxone (Narcan). Click [here](#) for more information.

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

A GoFundMe page, <https://www.gofundme.com/f/nicholas-feliz-dominici2730>, has been set-up by Nicholas's parents "Otoniel and Zoila," to help cover expenses. They said Nicholas was a happy, cheerful, intelligent, kind, curious, affectionate child. "All the words to describe the most beautiful and tender thing would not be enough to describe our son," they said. "Our family lost one of [its] most valuable treasures."



Photo courtesy of the NYPD
ADDITIONAL FENTANYL, OTHER drugs, and drug paraphernalia were found under a trap floor at Divino Nino Daycare Center in the Kingsbridge Heights section of the Bronx on Wednesday evening, Sept. 20, 2023, police said.

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