



# NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo by David Greene

**FRIENDS, FAMILY, FANS** and graffiti artists celebrate the life of “writer,” Michael Tracy, a counter-culture icon whose artistry coincided with the emergence of the Hip Hop movement in The Bronx in the 1970s, and who died on Sept. 3, 2023, during a memorial event held on Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood on Nov. 18, 2023.

## By DAVID GREENE

A second memorial event was held in November for counter-culture icon, Michael Tracy, 65, known as “Tracy 168,” a native of Kingsbridge who many regard as the father of modern-day graf-

fiti. Tracy was discovered unresponsive inside a Bronx Wendy’s restaurant on Sept. 3, and died reportedly of a heart attack.

About 50 friends, fans and former graffiti artists gathered outside Norwood’s Valentine-

Varian House, located at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, on Saturday, Nov. 18, to remember Tracy. Organizers said the location, also home to The Bronx Historical Society, was chosen due to its proximity to the Williamsbridge

Oval park, where Tracy spent much of his youth.

Longtime friend of the artist and Bedford Park resident, Terry Mangleo, arranged both gatherings following Tracy’s

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**Torres Funds Urban Farming at 20 Bronx Schools | pg 2**



**Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebrated at Monroe | pg 4**



**Bronx CB7 Budget Committee chair Jean Hill honored pg 14**

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# Torres Awards \$800K for Urban Farming in Schools

**By SÍLE MOLONEY**

U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) has awarded \$800,000 in community project funding to New York Sun Works, a local nonprofit dedicated to integrating the science of sustainability and climate education into K-12 urban schools. Torres visited X225 Theatre Arts Production Company School in Fordham Heights on Monday, Oct. 30, to see their hydroponic program in action and to formally make the check presentation in a classroom dedicated to the program.

Hydroponics is the technique of growing plants using a water-based nutrient solution, rather than soil. Principal Ron Link of X225 Theatre Arts Production Company School, Megan Nordgren, director of development and government relations at New York Sun Works, and students of the hydroponic program were present for the check presentation.

"The Bronx is the most resilient and resourceful county in the United States, and the students of The Bronx should have access to the same educational opportunities that are available to students elsewhere in the city," said Torres, whose district covers a large section of the borough stretching from the northwest to the South Bronx and is often cited as the poorest congressional district in the country.

"There is an urgent need to foster the next generation of leaders who have the capacity and will to confront the greatest challenge of our time – climate change," he said. "For me, this \$800,000 is not an expenditure, it is an investment. We're investing in our young people, we're investing in their public education, and we're investing in their leadership and environmental stewardship, which is needed now more than ever."

The funding, secured in the final Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, will provide new, state-of-the-art hydroponic classrooms at 20 additional Bronx public schools to teach science, sustainability, climate education, and nutrition, while students also grow food to share with their families and communities.

With the funding, partner schools will receive ongoing professional development training for science educators and weekly visits from a hydroponic specialist to guide teachers in hydroponic systems maintenance, provide planting, harvest, and produce distribution support. So far, 17 schools have received funding from Torres with three additional schools in progress.

Manuela Zamora is the NY Sun Works executive director and said in part, "Yesterday was the 11th anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and this district is no stranger to the effects of climate change and environmental injustice." Zamora said Torres understood the challenges climate change posed. "This investment is indicative of his commitment to bringing climate solutions to The Bronx," she said in part.

According to NY Sun Works officials, their non-profit brings quality education to the communities where it's most needed. They said through more than



Photo by Sile Moloney

(L TO R) STUDENTS, CHRISTINA SEPULVEDA and Myrie Larry, address those gathered in front of Principal Ron Link and Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) during a check presentation at X225 Theatre Arts Production Company School, located at 2190 Folin Street in Fordham Heights on Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, to fund the school's urban farming program sponsored by nonprofit, NY Sun Works.

300 partner schools, it is shaping the next generation of environmental innovators empowered to create solutions to global climate challenges. Its first hydroponic classroom opened in 2010. They said today it's reaching more than 100,000 students annually across New York City and beyond.

According to Torres' office, the congressman secured more than \$16.2 million in funding for 15 community projects that he said will directly respond to the most pressing needs of The Bronx, including expanding opportunities for middle class families and small businesses, strengthening access to quality healthcare and education, and reversing decades of disinvestment.

Norwood News spoke to two 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students of the hydroponic program at the school, located at 2190 Folin Street, next door to the infamous Twin Parks Towers, where an unrelenting fire tragically took the lives of 17 people, including children, in January 2022. Students at the adjacent school later donated some or all of the proceeds of their high school musical performance that year to the victims of the tragedy.

We asked Christina Sepulveda, 13, and Myrie Larry, 13, if it had been exciting to meet the congressman. "Yeah, it was pretty terrifying because he has

such a high position, and with our little e-grow, our little economy, it was kind of scary standing next to him," one of them said.

We asked what they chatted about with him. "I was basically telling him that we give them [the plants] their vital vitamins which is like water and sunlight, and that tower right there, it turns off and on," one of the students said. "We, basically, just water these daily and we try to keep these close to the window because.... I'm most likely assuming it's not on a timer, so we would turn that off and hopefully by when we're gone, the sunlight will reach the plants."

One of the students said they try to water the plants as much as they can, adding that one didn't need as much water because it was growing with humidity.

Asked if they both were always into science, one said, "Well, this is a Regents class, so, we're learning high school science, and we're just learning about how these plants are growing without the soil. We're just trying to see how big they can get without growing with soil, and I'm just really good at science!"

Asked if they preferred environmental science to other areas, one of the two said, "I mean, it's pretty cool, but I like doing chemical science as well." Asked if

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# BCC Students Commute Safely on New Shuttle Bus

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Community College (BCC) students can now commute safely to and from their homes to the college thanks to a new shuttle bus service made possible by a \$325,000 State and Municipal (SAM) grant from State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33).

BCC officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the college on Nov. 2 to celebrate the new service to and from its University Heights campus, in addition to the formal unveiling of newly installed outdoor fitness equipment near the main college thoroughway between Gould Hall and Ohio Field, which was also funded through the same grant.

"Bronx Community College is constantly striving to provide resources for students to accomplish their academic goals and enjoy their higher education experience," said Rivera, whose current district encompasses some or all of the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Fieldston, Spuyten Duyvil, North Riverdale, Riverdale, Fordham Manor, Fordham Heights, Mt. Hope, Allerton, Pelham Parkway, Belmont, Little Yemen, Van Nest, Indian Village and Morris Park.

Though he lamented no longer representing University Heights, since redistricting took effect at the beginning of 2023, the senator added, "I am honored to contribute to BCC's efforts and support its students by securing State funding for their shuttle buses and outdoor gym."

The shuttle service will be provided free-of-charge to and from three local transportation hubs, including the corner of Fordham Road and University Avenue (next to St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church), the corner of Fordham Road and Jerome Avenue (in front of City MD), and at Burnside and Jerome (in front of 9 West Burnside Avenue).

According to college officials, the shuttle buses, which are ADA accessible, are scheduled to arrive at these stops on average every 20-30 minutes, except in cases of heavy traffic or accidents. They said the service will operate Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. when classes are in session, with no service from 3.30 to 4 p.m. daily or on Fridays. Pick-up and drop-off are in front of Meister Hall at BCC.

BCC Interim President Dr. Milton Santiago said of the service, "I want to thank Sen. Rivera for making this possible. We are always looking for ways we can assist our students by easing the burden of juggling a busy home life and making it less stressful getting to and from campus, and the outdoor fitness area will help provide a convenient way for our students to maintain a healthy lifestyle."

Student Government Association (SGA) President Krishta Fernandez and BCC Director of Public Safety Saul Fraguada also attended the event. "We are pleased to be able to offer safe and reliable service to the college community, especially during the evening hours and in inclement weather," Fraguada said.



Photo by Síle Moloney

**STATE SEN. GUSTAVO** Rivera (S.D. 33) is joined by representatives of Bronx Community College to formally launch the college's shuttle bus service to and from the campus during a ceremony on Nov. 2, 2023.

During her remarks, Fernandez referred to the public college, part of The City University of New York, as a diamond in the rough. "We are strong, we are resilient, and I am happy that light is shining on us once again, and during my presidency," she said referring to the bus service launch. Fernandez added that she hoped the college would continue to grow and show the rest of the world what BCC can do.

*Norwood News* previously reported on heating problems which BCC students and staff had endured. We later asked Krishta Fernandez if the issue was now resolved. She said, "That's actually at the top of my list because that was actually something I was unaware of because at the time, I wasn't on campus."

She added, "That is something that is being addressed first and foremost because we're actually expecting a very cold winter this semester. The boiler in question has been replaced. The other ones we're actually inspecting each one to make sure each one is running, and if repairs need to be made, or if it needs to be replaced, that is something that we're going to look into."

Later we spoke to BCC student, Nicholas Fernandez, who, as it turned out, is an older brother to the SGA president. We asked Nicholas Fernandez if he had far to travel to get to college. "I am normally a walker, but I do know many students, especially the late students because I'm also a late student, that were waiting for the shuttle buses to come back," he said. "We eagerly waited for it. Thank goodness they are now here."

Nicholas Fernandez, who is studying business administration with computer applications, said most of his peers [late students] have responsibilities throughout the day, and said having the bus service at night was especially helpful to them to manage their schedule.

Given the focus on ensuring the BCC shuttle buses were ADA-compliant and given that the MTA falls under the responsibility of the State, we asked Rivera if perhaps he had any inside knowledge on the start date for the installation of the long-awaited elevator at Mosholu

Parkway subway station, which serves both North Central Bronx Hospital and Montefiore Medical Center.

The senator said, "Well, it is part of the priorities that I give the MTA for my district, certainly, but as you know, there's a lot of priorities which a lot of my colleagues also have for the MTA, and then we need to figure out what can be done, and can't be done," he said.

Rivera mentioned he had recently helped facilitate an elevator installation at Tremont subway station. "There's a larger goal for the MTA to make the entire system accessible within a time

period but I know that it [Mosholu Parkway] is one of the stations that we are trying to have prioritized." He recommended raising the issue again when the budget rolls around because he would have more clarity on what resources were available.

"But you can be sure that I will always prioritize things that have as broad an impact as possible," the senator said. "I believe deeply in public transportation, and we should make it a more effective and efficient system so that people can rely less and less on their personal vehicles, and more and more on the public transportation system. If we're going to ask people to give up their cars, we need to make the public transportation system better and more reliable. So, I certainly remain committed to that idea, and I will try my best to make that priority a reality as it relates to the elevator."

Back on the topic of the shuttle bus, student, Linmi Aviles, was also glad of the new service, saying, "Yeah, in the fall semester, it was such a great blessing because I live by Botanical Garden, so it was a direct transfer and because it was cold and it was dark, you know, going home alone in the dark is scary." Aviles described the female BCC shuttle bus driver as "an angel" who she said drops her where she needs to be. "I know that a lot of schools have [their own] transportation so this is a blessing," Aviles said. "I look forward to using it let me tell you!"

## NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

### PUBLIC NOTICE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM STATE PLAN

In accordance with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the State of New York is making available for public review and comment the 2024-2026 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program State Plan.

**REVIEWING OR OBTAINING THE STATE PLAN:** The 2024-2026 State Plan will be available for inspection through the Office website at <https://otda.ny.gov/policy/tanf/>. Copies of the State Plan may be requested by calling 1-518-474-9344 or by writing to the Employment and Income Support Programs, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, 40 North Pearl Street, 11A, Albany, NY 12243, ATTN: Melissa Alexander

**WRITTEN COMMENTS:** Written comments on the State Plan must be submitted by **December 28, 2023** and addressed to:

Melissa Alexander  
New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance  
40 North Pearl Street, 11A  
Albany, New York 12243

Written comments received by the Office will be available for public inspection.



## INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the Israel-Hamas war.



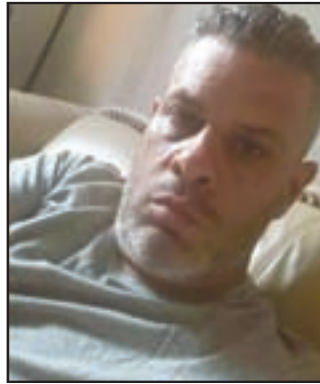
"The violence Israel suffered on October 7th was horrible and the violence that Palestinians are suffering now is horrible. We need to find a way to peace."

**Margaret Groarke,**  
Jerome Park  
(Photo by David Greene)



"I don't see the point of the war and the evil that's going on. There is too much violence and many innocent people being killed. I believe they should have a sit down and discuss the root of the problem and how to fix it. A solution can be found when both parties benefit from each other in a positive way. Innocent children shouldn't be killed; they are the future that can make the world better. Kids do what they see, not what they are told. I pray this will stop so our kids can make, and have, a better future."

**Catalyn Perez,**  
Highbridge  
(Photo by David Greene)



"I pray for peace every day. There are so many problems in The Bronx, but we are bombarded with these horrible images from the war. I just want it to end. There will be no winners."

**Steve Bobker,**  
Kingsbridge Heights  
(Photo provided by Steve Bobker)



"With this latest, most horrific, and criminal genocide of the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank by the Israeli and U.S. governments shows that the far-right, extremist, settler-colonial project of the Israeli-ruling classes must end, for the safety of the Palestinian people, the Israeli people, the people of the Middle East, and all people everywhere."

**Jennifer Scarlott,**  
Riverdale  
(Photo provided by Jennifer Scarlott)



"As a Jewish woman and New Yorker, I find myself engaged by what's happening in Gaza. 'Never again' means never again... for all. In my opinion, Israel's actions against a captive civilian population, half of whom are kids, are not only unjustified, but even more horrific because they mirror what was done in the Holocaust. U.S. funding and support of such violence is appalling as well. An immediate ceasefire is needed and [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's administration should face international trial."

**Janet Goodman,**  
Norwood  
(Photo provided by Janet Goodman)

## Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebrated at Monroe College

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson joined Ponce Bank to host her Annual Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebration at Monroe on Tuesday, Nov. 14. Held inside the college's Mintz Auditorium, located at 2501 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, the event honored individuals who have contributed to the growth and promotion of their community and culture.

This year, the honorees included musician, composer and music store owner, Miguel Angel Amadeo, Detective of NYPD PSA7, Jessica Rivera; outreach coordinator for development & external affairs at Bronx Care Health Systems, Georgina DuBois, Administrative Judge Bronx Supreme Court-Civil Term, The Honorable Doris M. Gonzalez, and youth honoree was

(continued on page 9)



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Bronx Borough President

**BRONXITES OF PUERTO** Rican descent, honorees, elected officials and friends of the community join Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and representatives from Ponce Bank as she hosts her Annual Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebration at Monroe College, located at 2501 Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor, The Bronx, on Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023.



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# Who Runs the World? Part 1: Amity Lui

By SILE MOLONEY

*Editor's Note: Our intention was to publish this story in an earlier edition, but election coverage took precedence. Part II of this story will run in our next edition.*

Among the 51,402 finishers in the 2023 TCS New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov. 5, were two local runners and members of Norwood-based running group, Bronx Nomads. We spoke to both women ahead of, and on, race day as they joined what New York Road Runners said was the world's largest marathon of 2023, and the third-largest edition of the race in the event's history.

## Motivation

Running in her third marathon, this week, we asked Amity Lui, 26, what motivated her to want to run again. "I think after running the first and second, they weren't such great experiences because I was injured," she said. "So, hopefully this time will be a much better experience just to see what our bodies are capable of, especially after putting in the training for so many months."

We asked what injuries she incurred the first time. "The first time I had a knee injury," she said. "The second year was not running-related. I had a traumatic electric scooter accident. Unfortunately, it took me out for much longer than my actual running injury. For the first year, I was out for about two months, because that's all I had left. I got injured pretty close to race day and I had to stop training and ended up having to run/walk the marathon. It took me a little under four-and-a-half hours." Lui said it was miserable.

She said the second time she had been on vacation and had an accident. "I didn't actually get to start my training block until very late because I was in so much pain," Lui said. "I did go to PT [physical therapy] and I did everything I could, but due to the trauma, you really can't rush the process. So, for that one, I only had two months to train from basically nothing because I was out for so long. That was also very miserable."

Lui said on top of that, it was about 80 degrees when she ran with very high humidity [in 2022]. "It was just awful," she said. Asked if her training plan was going better this time around, she said, "I wouldn't say definitely better. I've had some other scares come up." Lui talked about plantar fasciitis, an inflammation of the plantar fascia tissue in the foot used during walking and foot movement.

"You get a lot of heel pain, and it's a lot worse in the morning when you first wake up," she said. "It's just chronic inflammation." She said her training had been going pretty well up until about three weeks before race day. "So, I thought I was lucky and nope...could not escape the cycle with no injury," she said.

To address the situation, Lui said rolling her foot on a frozen water bottle helped but added it didn't treat the injury. "It's just more for pain management," she said. She also did physical



Photo by Sile Moloney

**AMITY LUI, 26**, A member of the Norwood-based Bronx Nomads running group, proudly displays her finisher's medal after completing her third New York City Marathon in Midtown Manhattan on Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023.

therapy, strengthening her feet and ankles through rehab exercises, and cutting down on mileage.

## Preparation

We asked her how she got into running, and what made her want to run a marathon in the first place. "I have always been active my entire life. I started dancing when I was three years old. Then I took taekwondo, kickboxing. I was a swimmer, and in college I would just lift weights. I lifted weights in high school for fun, and then in college again."

Lui attended Hunter College and was right by Central Park, so would go for leisurely runs in between classes. "One day, one of my friends said, 'Hey! There's a 4-mile race in Central Park. Let me know if you're interested, because I know you kind of like running.' That got me hooked into running races," she said. "I signed up for a half marathon that year and it's all been a lot of fun since then." She said now her training is a lot more structured.

Asked how she amended her diet in preparation for the marathon, she said she liked to think her nutrition was pretty good. "I am a sports dietitian," she said. "I also have a private practice where I work with runners to optimize nutrition for performance and for recovery, and I try to apply as many of those principles to my own life as well."

Lui said this involved a lot of carbs, which she said a lot of runners don't take enough of. "There's still this stigma that carbohydrates cause weight gain or fat gain, and that they want runners to adapt to being able to oxidize fat as fuel,"

she said. "So, then they tell you to train, fasted." Lui said she prefers working with runners to foster a healthy relationship with food. "I believe you should fuel your body through food so that you *can* run," she said. "It's not a punishment. You don't have to earn your food by burning more calories in order to eat something."

## Mindset

We asked about the mental preparation involved. "Yeah, the mind is a very powerful thing. You know, having doubts is definitely part of the training process, and having some impostor syndrome, but I think throughout the training cycle, most people train 16 to 20 weeks for a marathon if you haven't already a base, especially if you come from Spring half-marathon season. I think continuing to show up for yourself, and throughout the training program you don't rely so much on motivation. It's *dedication* that will get you where you want to be when you continue putting in the work."

Asked how she balanced her training regime with the rest of her life, Lui said, "It's definitely a challenge, a lot of 5/6 a.m. runs or in the morning, which are very difficult, especially as the weather gets cold and the sun rises later and sets earlier. I also work a lot. It's not that easy, but it takes a lot of planning ahead." She said this means all her clothes are ready and all her "pre-run fuel" to ensure she's on "autopilot" in the morning. "I don't have time to contemplate," she said. "I get ready in less than 15 minutes."

Recently, she said her scheduling work got a lot busier so she invested in

a treadmill, which helped a lot as she could train when she wanted without having to worry about safety. "A lot of times I end up breaking up my run," she said. "So, sometimes I can't always get all my mileage in at once, so I'll split it half in the morning and half in the evening, wherever it fits." She said it was important to be ok with knowing that everything can't always be perfect.

## Support

We asked about being part of a running group like Bronx Nomads. "Bronx Nomads is an amazing community," she said. Lui is from New York City, having lived previously in Brooklyn and on Staten Island, but said when she first moved to The Bronx, she had zero running friends.

She said she stumbled upon the group on social media where she saw they met on Mondays in the Williamsbridge Oval, and admits she was a little skeptical at first. "I was nervous. I was like - I don't know anybody," she said. "What if they're not friendly? What if you don't run fast enough?" Lui continued, "But they were very welcoming, and I stuck with them ever since. We train together, we eat together, we hang out together, and we really kind of developed a second running family."

She said sometimes when they run locally in groups, residents cheer and clap. "They're like, 'Keep going!' or 'You're so inspiring!'" she said. We asked Lui if she felt it would be good to amend the marathon route to take in more of the borough, given it currently only takes in its southern tip. She agreed, saying before she lived here, she didn't know much about it, and believes other non-Bronxites can have a negative image of it, sometimes saying the marathon would be their first and last time in the borough.

She said afterwards, however, she saw videos in which some runners said The Bronx had the loudest cheer squads and were cheering for everybody and not just their own teams.

We caught up with Lui after she crossed the finish line on the big day, and asked her how it went. "I feel much better now that it's done! I would do it all over again for sure no matter how much pain it was!" she said, smiling. Asked what the toughest part of the route had been she said, "I got sick on Thursday, so I've been trying to hold liquids down. I was really dreading the Queensborough [bridge]. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I just kind of told myself no matter how slow I go I just cannot stop. I ran with my friend, Wilken, over there who held me accountable and said, 'You just cannot stop.'"

Asked if the support had been good in The Bronx, she said, "It was amazing! I may be biased but I would say it's the best support group out there!" Summing up the day, she said, "I would just say if you're interested in running, the New York Marathon is a great experience!"



# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE

## Appeals Court Upholds Chokehold Ban Ruling

The New York Court of Appeals has upheld a ruling on the legality of Local Law 66 of 2020, prohibiting the use of chokeholds and other actions that restrict the flow of air or blood by compressing the diaphragm, during an arrest. The New York City Council issued a statement following the announcement, saying in part, “[The] decision is consistent with our goal to advance public safety. The Council passed Local Law 66 of 2020 to protect New Yorkers from being needlessly harmed by improper police restraints, and we are pleased to see the New York Court of Appeals unanimously uphold it. Now that litigation has concluded, we look forward to the continued enforcement of this law to keep New Yorkers safe.”

## Lehman College Professor Honored

The American Physical Society (APS) has awarded Lehman Distinguished Professor of Physics Eugene Chudnovsky its 2024 Andrei Sakharov Prize, which recognizes APS fellows for their leadership and efforts to uphold human rights its 2024 Andrei Sakharov Prize, which recognizes APS fellows for their leadership and efforts to uphold human rights. The APS cited Chudnovsky’s “decades of leadership of prominent campaigns on behalf of oppressed scientists, including chairmanship of the APS and New York Academy of Sciences human rights committees and co-chairing of the Committee of Concerned Scientists.”

Lehman College officials said Chudnovsky immigrated from the Soviet Union in 1987 and joined CUNY in 1988. They said his human rights work arose directly from his experience as a dissident in the U.S.S.R. They said he has said that scientists are often targeted by repressive regimes because they are free thinkers, adding that the very nature of their work requires scientists, especially physicists, to question our understanding of the world. “There are a disproportionate number of physicists in prison,” Chudnovsky said.

“Contributing to the effort to help unfairly imprisoned scientists has long been a part of my life. In some way, I feel awkward about receiving a prize for the work that gives me enormous satisfaction. It is a great honor to see Sakharov’s and my name appear in one sentence, and to be a recipient of the prize awarded in the past to human rights defenders like the late Yuri Orlov, who spent years in a Russian GULAG, and Narges Mohammadi of Iran, who received the Nobel Peace Prize last month,” he added.

The prize includes \$10,000, which Chudnovsky said he will donate to the Committee of Concerned Scientists.



Photo courtesy of Lehman College  
**LEHMAN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR** of Physics Eugene Chudnovsky

## Montefiore Expands Nurse Training with Grant

Montefiore Medical Center announced on Nov. 20 that it has received a \$300,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to expand its training, retaining, advancing, and integrating novice nurses at Montefiore-Einstein (TRAINN@ME) program. The program is aimed at training and retaining registered nurses to care for the marginalized patient population in The Bronx. Montefiore officials said TRAINN@ME seeks to expand and diversify the nursing workforce in high-need units throughout the health system by taking novice nurses and placing them in a supportive educational and training environment for a six-month residency program.

## New 14-Story Building at 3059 Valentine Avenue

Building applications have been filed with NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) for a new, 14-story, mixed-use building at 3059 Valentine Avenue in the Bedford Park section of The Bronx, as reported by YIMBY. Located at the intersection of East 204th Street and Valentine Avenue, the corner lot is two blocks from the Bedford Park Boulevard subway station, serviced by the B and D trains. Rajive Maret is listed as the owner behind the applications.

The proposed 129-foot-tall development will yield 50,852 square feet, with 47,413 square feet designated for residential space, 2,890 square feet for commercial space, and 548 square feet for community facility space. The building will yield 65 residential units, most likely rentals based on the average unit scope of 729 square feet.

The concrete-based structure will also have a cellar but no accessory parking. Gerald Caliendo Architects is listed as the architect of record. Demolition permits were filed in December 2022. An estimated completion date for the new structure has not been announced.



## Body of Deceased Man Found in Van Cortlandt Park

Police are investigating the death of a man found deceased last month in Van Cortlandt Park woods in an area southwest of Woodlawn Heights on Friday the 13th. According to the NYPD’s 50th Precinct, officers were called to a wooded area near the Allen Shandler Recreation Area of Van Cortlandt Park, located at Jerome Avenue and East 233rd Street at 12:40 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13.

An unnamed police official issued a brief statement on the incident on Oct. 17 that read in part, “Officers observed a 42-year-old male, unconscious and unresponsive. EMS responded and pronounced the aided male deceased on scene.”

The statement concluded, “The Of-

fice of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death. The investigation remains ongoing at this time. The identity of the deceased is pending family notification.” In follow-up email requests sent by *Norwood News*, the NYPD was asked about an earlier police radio transmission seemingly referring to the incident in question during which an officer was heard saying the deceased was discovered hanging from a tree.

The NYPD was also asked if they could confirm reports that the victim had been discovered by a City Parks’ department employee. We did not receive a response to our inquiries. Several ambulances as well as representatives from the City’s Medical Examiner were seen at the scene on the day of the incident, in addition to police.

# Torres Awards \$800K for Urban Farming in Schools

(continued from page 2)

they think they’d like to go on to study science in the future, one said, “Probably, yeah.”

The other said, “I don’t know. I feel like I really enjoy it. I think that I would like to explore the subject more when I get older. I’m not sure if I would like 100 percent but it’s something that I have in mind because it’s really fun and I don’t know. I just really like it, and I feel like I’m really good at it as

well!”

Asked if they felt the urban farms were a fun way for people to learn about science, one said, “Yes, it definitely is, and I really liked the hands on, and because it’s more of a creative way to show kids how to treat living organisms and stuff.”

The other said, Yeah, and we can take it home and eat it! It’s a really fun way for children to do something and then afterwards, be rewarded for it.”



Photo by Síle Moloney

(L TO R) STUDENTS AND STAFF of X225 Theatre Arts Production Company School, located at 2190 Folin Street in Fordham Heights, including Principal Ron Link, join Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) and representatives from NY Sun Works during a check presentation at the school on Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, to fund the school’s urban farming program run by NY Sun Works.





## Letters To The Editor

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

### Metro North Bronx East Penn Station Access

U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer recently announced a \$1.6 billion grant to the MTA for construction of the Metro North Bronx East Penn Station access project. He overlooked a critical issue. Will Amtrak have sufficient track outage support and "Force Account" support i.e. Amtrak employees to meet the promised 2027 completion date? The project costs have already grown from \$600 million 20 years ago, to \$3.1 billion prior to last year's construction contract award.

This price tag does not include the cost of borrowing, hidden under the MTA operating agency budget, to help project financing. Borrowing, along with contract change orders due to unforeseen site conditions, Amtrak providing insufficient track outages for contractor access to the work site, or requests by operations or maintenance groups for additional work could all result in added costs.

The final price tag might grow beyond \$3.1 billion. It will not be known until 100% of all contract punch lists are complete, final contract retainage is paid to all contractors, and MTA makes public the cost of borrowing that supports project financing.

The same Amtrak resources are also committed to other projects along the northeast corridor, between Washington D.C. and Boston, for years to come. Three of these in the Metro New York area include the \$1.6 billion New Jersey North-east Corridor Portal Bridge, the \$1.6 billion East River Tunnel, and the \$16.8 billion Gateway Tunnel Hudson River Phase One projects.

This does not include ongoing routine maintenance at the Penn Station, Newark; Penn Station, New York; Hud-

son; and East River tunnels; the \$2 billion Maryland Susquehanna River Bridge; the \$4.7 billion, 1.4-mile Baltimore Potomac Tunnel; the \$827 million Connecticut River Bridge; or other stations, tracks, bridges, tunnels, and facilities along the northeast corridor.

How can Amtrak provide sufficient employees to work on these key, state-of-good-repair, and system expansion projects while supporting work on the MTA Metro North Bronx East Penn Station Access project all at the same time? Residents, commuters, potential future riders, taxpayers, local community planning board members, and public officials need to see a detailed project budget and construction schedule to monitor progress for this promised capital improvement. This would meet the transparency promised by Gov. Kathy Hochul and MTA Chairman Janno Lieber under their respective watches.

**Larry Penner**  
Great Neck

**Richard Warren's Response to Nat Weiner's Letter [Norwood News, Nov. 9-Nov. 22, 2023] in response to Richard Warren's original letter on "The Santos Act" [Norwood News, Oct. 26-Nov. 8]**

Nat Weiner writes a dumb letter claiming my letter is not intelligent. It was, and despite Weiner's claim, it was fact-based. Weiner doesn't dispute my facts. He just makes excuses for candidate Robert Zimmerman's stupidity. Zimmerman's excuse for not researching George Santos' claims as a candidate was that it would have cost thousands of dollars. I doubt that's true, but I'm sure he raised enough money to afford that. I don't think there's anything lacking in intelligence in assuming that investigating your opponent is something routinely done by candidates.

Weiner asks how I would address candidates lying to us? Aren't the opposition and the news media supposed to do that? Is Weiner suggesting that I personally investigate every candidate who runs for office? Obviously, voters cannot be mandated to research candidates be-

fore voting, but it would be a good idea. They research products on the internet before buying them. Why not candidates before voting for them?

As for Weiner claiming that editor Sile Moloney should not have printed my letter based on his opinion of it, that makes as much sense as me claiming Moloney should not have printed his letter based on my opinion of it. Moloney's editor's note should have given no apology. She's apologizing because a letter Weiner hated "slipped by" her? As for her saying that she prefers letters dealing with local issues, my letter was in response to an article in the *Norwood News* about the SANTOS act.

**Richard Warren,**  
Van Cortlandt Village

*Editor's Note: We do our best to add context to letters to make things as clear as possible for all readers. When we published Mr. Warren's original letter on Oct. 26, we did not include a note explaining that Zimmerman choose not to further screen Santos' candidacy during the NY-3 election for budgetary reasons. Our apology was more of a courtesy for not having done so, rather than anything else. While we did report on the Santos Act because it had been discussed by local Bronx congressman Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), we did not cover the election between Zimmerman and Santos in New York's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, which covers parts of Long Island, Nassau County and Queens.*

### Re "Parking Fine" Letter by Richard Warren

Anyone who registers a vehicle in New York City agrees to abide by the Vehicle and Traffic Law of New York State, the various rules governing parking in New York City, and the New York Code Rules and Regulations. I just looked up the corner Mr. Warren references on Google Maps. The sign is there, and the ground is covered with snow, indicating the sign was not just put up there recently. It's this simple; read the signs. Obey the law.

This is not theory with me. I have lived in Parkchester for 8+ years, one of the most difficult areas to park in in the universe. Due to the location of my residence, it is impractical to park in a garage. I park on the street. I cruise as long as necessary to find a legal parking spot. On four occasions, I've had to take an Uber to my house from where I parked the car, cheaper than a ticket.

If all Mr. Warren's friend received was a ticket, he should consider himself lucky. Thirty-three years ago, my father (RIP) had his car towed, although I managed to get the ticket dismissed on a technicality. Mr. Warren needs to stop blaming the government for his friend's ticket. Mr. Warren's friend is the only one responsible.

**Nat Weiner**  
Parkchester

### Fines / Pensions / Jail Terms for former Bronx Politicians / Union Repts

Editor's Note: As requested in a previous letter by Richard Marias, *Norwood News* is continuing to actively follow up with various federal, State and City departments to obtain the status of jail terms, fines, and pensions for various former Bronx elected officials and union representatives previously arrested on alleged corruption charges. We will share any updates we receive in due course.

*To ensure sufficient time for review of all letters to the editor, please send them, along with supporting sources, to [norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org](mailto: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.*

# Opinion

## The Great American Smoke Out & Lung Cancer Awareness Month

By ANGELA HANSON

The third Thursday in November is designated as the Great American Smoke Out (GASO), which is observed annually. GASO is a potent reminder to smokers to make the commitment to live a smoke-free life and encourages smokers to stop smoking as the first step towards living a healthier lifestyle.

The Centers for Disease Control

(CDC) states that a person's heart rate begins to decrease minutes after they stop smoking, and that their chance of having a heart attack dramatically decreases in one to two years. More benefits to their health accrue over time if they continue to remain smoke-free. A smoking cessation timetable on the CDC's website under the "Benefits of Quitting" tab outlines the immediate and long-term health benefits of giving up.

November also brings awareness of lung cancer. Smoking is said to be responsible for around 85% of lung cancer cases, according to the CDC. Furthermore, increased knowledge highlights the disease's startling effects. Since exposure to secondhand smoke is one of the risk factors for lung cancer, lung cancer can affect both smokers and non-

smokers.

Thankfully, screenings may make early lung cancer detection possible, potentially leading to better results and higher survival rates. GASO and Lung Cancer Awareness Month go hand in hand. During this month of awareness, it is critical to acknowledge the role that healthcare services, support systems, and education play in preventing smoking-related illnesses and lessening the incidence of lung cancer.

NYC Smoke-Free will be hosting several GASO events this month aimed at educating and informing the public on second-hand smoke exposure and distributing educational materials to help build awareness around helping smokers to quit.

At NYC Smoke-Free, we want to enable people to make informed health de-

cisions by facilitating discussions about health screenings and quitting smoking as well as by offering educational materials. Our program promotes health, encourages healthy lifestyle choices, and lessens the harmful impacts of smoking-related illnesses and smoking prevalence.

We are getting closer to a time when fewer people will lose their lives to smoking-related diseases, such as lung cancer, by increasing awareness and promoting smoking cessation.

For more information on NYC Smoke-Free or to lend support in ending NYC's devastating tobacco epidemic please visit [www.NYCSmokeFree.org](http://www.NYCSmokeFree.org)

Angela Hanson is the Bronx Reality Check youth engagement officer at NYC Smoke-Free, Public Health Solutions.



# Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebrated at Monroe College

(continued from page 4)

19-year-old Julian Barreto, a senior at P176X. Jomil Luna, LGBTQIA+ health advocate, served as emcee for the night.

Assembly Member George Alvarez (A.D. 78), who was also in attendance on the night and who represents some or all of the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Belmont, Fordham Manor, University Heights and Kingsbridge Heights, said of the event, "Honored to attend Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson's Annual Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebration at Monroe College this evening alongside my team!"

He added, The Bronx is home to one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the United States. Tonight, and every day, we celebrate the rich contributions of Puerto Ricans to the State of New York, the beautiful 78th Assembly District, the Bronx, and the City of New York!"



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Bronx Borough President

**BRONXITES OF PUERTO** Rican descent, honorees, elected officials and friends of the community join Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and representatives from Ponce Bank as she hosts her Annual Puerto Rican Heritage Month Celebration at Monroe College, located at 2501 Jerome Avenue in Fordham Manor, The Bronx, on Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023.

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## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY &amp; DAVID GREENE



### Man Arrested for Unprovoked Assaults

Having appealed to the public for help identifying a person of interest, the NYPD said they arrested a 29-year-old man in connection to two separate assaults which took place on Friday, Nov. 10, in University Heights. Police said that at around 8.10 p.m., in front of 2265 University Avenue, a person approached a 49-year-old man from behind and forcibly knocked him to the ground in an unprovoked assault. "The individual mounted the victim and struck him with an unknown object and attempted to press his thumbs into the victim's eyes before fleeing the location," police said.

They added, "Moments later, in front of 2324 University Avenue, the same person approached a 52-year-old female and slashed her in the forehead with an unknown object in an unprovoked assault." Police said the assailant then fled the location on foot heading northbound on University Avenue towards Fordham Road. "Both victims sustained non-life-threatening injuries to their faces and were transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition," police added.

On Saturday, Nov. 11, police said that pursuant to an ongoing investigation, Xavier Rodriguez, of no fixed address, was arrested the same day and was charged with assault. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Kingsbridge: Police Lieutenant Assaulted

A police lieutenant from the 50th Precinct was hospitalized after he was assaulted by a subway rider at the 238th Street subway station in Kingsbridge, police said. The incident occurred on Saturday, Nov. 11, at around 9.45 p.m., when officers responded to a radio run regarding a dispute involving a person armed with a knife at the 238th Street subway station, they said. "Upon arrival, officers were informed by an MTA conductor that four males, possibly armed with knives, engaged in a dispute with another group who had de-trained at the 231 Street subway station," police said.

They continued, "During their investigation, officers gave law orders to two individuals to detain but they refused. The individuals then began punching one [of the] officers in the head and body, causing lacerations and swelling to his left eye." Police said the group then fled onto the street and were later apprehended. "A knife, box cutter, and straight razor were recovered from the individuals," they said, adding the lieutenant was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

Police said Marquise Webb, 24, of Yonkers, NY and Brian Innocent, 24, of New Rochelle, NY were later charged with assault on a police officer, criminal possession of a weapon, resisting arrest, obstructing governmental administra-

tion, criminal trespass, and disorderly conduct.

### Van Cortlandt Village: Man Charged in Hammer Attack

Police said a Bronx man is facing several charges after he allegedly struck a 77-year-old woman with a hammer before leading police on a wild car chase that also injured two police officers in Van Cortlandt Village. They said officers responded to a 911 call regarding a person who had reportedly assaulted a woman with a hammer at Putnam Avenue and West 238th Street at 1.30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22.

"Upon arrival of police to the scene, a 77-year-old female reported that she was walking when an unknown male approached her and struck her both hands with a hammer causing swelling and bruising," police said. "The suspect then intentionally struck the trunk of a parked vehicle with a hammer, causing damage."

Without disclosing details of a dramatic police pursuit into Manhattan which apparently ensued, police said, "The suspect then intentionally struck a marked police vehicle causing damage and minor injuries to the two officers. While attempting to apprehend the suspect, he [the suspect] slammed a police officer's hand in the car door, causing bruising, swelling, and bleeding."

Norwood News spoke to a young woman from Brooklyn who had been asking drivers for change at the northbound Fordham Road exit of the Major Deegan Expressway, moments after a police car chase unfolded. She said she saw several police vehicles stop a black vehicle entering the Deegan and traveling in a southbound direction. She said the vehicle U-turned, driving against the traffic, sparking the police pursuit.

Police radio transmissions reveal the car, a black BMW, fled over the West 207th Street Bridge that connects The Bronx with Manhattan, where the vehicle was cornered a second time by police at West 206th Street and 9th Avenue. Police were later heard on police radio chasing the vehicle into Manhattan along F.D.R. Drive. A female officer was heard reporting to her dispatcher, "We have him at 206th and 9th. He's still in the vehicle and we have the street blocked." However, minutes later officers were heard chasing the suspect on the F.D.R.

One officer is heard asking a dispatcher what the suspect was wanted for. The dispatcher replies, "It's for a male that was hitting people with a hammer." Police later arrested Orlando Roper, 35, of Sedgwick Avenue. He was charged with assault, assault on a police officer, criminal mischief, and resisting arrest. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Bronx Woman Charged with Fraud, Stealing House from Dead Man

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Nov. 13 that a Bronx woman was charged with grand lar-

ceny (substantial theft) and additional charges for selling the Williamsbridge home of a dead man who had the same name as her deceased father.

According to the investigation, on March 17, 2020, Edward King Jr., the father of the defendant, 35-year-old Mercedes Tiffany King, died, at which point the defendant filed a petition seeking to become the administrator of her father's estate. On April 15, 2020, a man whose name was also Edward L. King died, leaving behind his property at 929 East 219th Street in Williamsbridge, valued at \$675,000.

According to the investigation, the defendant allegedly claimed to be the heir of this property and entered into a contract to sell it for \$480,000, making \$356,075.69 from a wire transfer which was sent from her real estate attorney. After her attorney realized she was not the heir to the home, King was asked to return the money, but refused.

She allegedly spent at least \$50,000 on a 2021 Audi Q8, \$17,500 on interior design work, \$17,000 on luxury jewelry, paid her brother \$10,000 to be her personal driver, and spent \$6,000 on artwork.

The district attorney said that Mercedes Tiffany King was charged with first-degree grand larceny, two counts of second-degree grand larceny, second-degree criminal possession of stolen property, two counts of third-degree grand larceny, second-degree forgery, first-degree scheme to defraud, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing, first-degree falsifying business records, second degree falsifying business records, and second-degree offering a false instrument for filing.

She was arraigned on Thursday, Nov. 9, before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Kim Parker. Bail was set at \$100,000 cash, \$300,000 bond, and \$300,000 partially secured bond at 10%. The defendant is due back in court on Dec. 7 and is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

### Fordham Heights: Moped Driver Sought following Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person and vehicle seen in the accompanying top right photo. They said the person is wanted for questioning in connection with a robbery that occurred in Fordham Heights. Police said that on Wednesday, Nov. 15, at approximately 12.35 p.m., the victim, an 18-year-old woman, was walking in front of 2477 Grand Concourse when she was approached by a person on a moped.

"The individual forcibly removed the victim's chain from her neck before fleeing," police said. "The individual was last seen traveling eastbound on East 188 Street on the moped." They said the victim suffered minor injuries and was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital. They said the person sought is described as male, has a medium complex-

ion, and was last seen wearing a black mask, a black jacket, and black pants. They said the moped was described as black with a distinct metal rack on the rear.



### Kingsbridge/Fieldston: Man Sought for Alleged Armed Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo below who they say is sought in connection to an alleged armed robbery that occurred on the border of Kingsbridge and Fieldston. They said that on Saturday, Nov. 11, at around 3.40 p.m., the victim, a 24-year-old man, arranged to meet with, and sell a jacket to, an unidentified person in the vicinity of West 242nd Street and Broadway.

Police said that during the transaction, the person tried on the jacket and then proceeded to display a gun before fleeing the location with the jacket. They said he fled on a gray Citibike, heading southbound on Broadway, adding there were no reported injuries arising from the incident. Police said the person sought is described as male, has a light to medium complexion, curly hair, wore all-black attire, and rode a gray Citibike.



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.



# Long Lines for Turkeys Amid High Food Costs

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Almost four years on from the start of the pandemic, the long lines of Bronxites waiting at Bedford Park's Tracey Towers for free turkeys at one of several giveaways held in the lead up to Thanksgiving, show food insecurity, amid the prevailing high cost of food, is still a concern for many Bronxites.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson joined District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz, who broadly represents the northwest Bronx, on Nov. 16 to distribute turkeys not only to residents of the towers but to New Yorkers who had traveled from as far away as Brooklyn for the event.

State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), who represents some or all of Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Fieldston, Spuyten Duyvil, North Riverdale, Riverdale, Fordham Manor, Fordham Heights, Mt. Hope, Allerton, Pelham Parkway, Belmont, Little Yamen, Van Nest, Indian Village and Morris Park, Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80), who broadly represents some or all of Norwood, Baychester, Allerton, Morris Park, Van Nest, Williamsbridge, Pelham Parkway and Pelham Gardens, and Rep. Adriano Espaillat, who represents parts of The Bronx and northern Manhattan, also supported the event, and were represented on the day by their staff.

Gibson joined HOT 97, Ebro in the Morning, WBSL, and Eat Clean Bro for a live broadcast of the Annual Turkey Drive, held in the Tracey Towers community room, located at 40 West Moshulu Parkway South. Hot 97's vice president of artist and label relations and music director, TT Torrez; Ebro in the Morning hosts, Ebro Darden, Peter Rosenberg, and Laura Stylez; and WBSL's JusNik, joined for the occasion.

After an early start that morning, Gibson told *Norwood News*, "I want to be here to support the residents and



Photo by Sile Moloney

**COUNCILMAN ERIC DINOWITZ** and Bronx Borough Vanessa Gibson hand out turkeys to Bronxites during a Thanksgiving giveaway at Tracey Towers in Bedford Park on Nov. 16, 2023.

families in Tracy Towers, so I want to acknowledge WBSL, Hot 97, the elected officials, RY Management [the management company for Tracey Towers], Eat Clean Bro, INCA Relief, as well as Bronx-Care, and really thank them for providing turkeys, fixings, and side items of produce for the residents here to wish them a very happy and blessed Thanksgiving season."

For his part, Dinowitz said, "This is a wonderful event. Tracy Towers, the residents here, are, of course, wonderful and we're doing what we can throughout the district to make sure we're giving what we can to the community."

He added, "So, partnering with Borough President Gibson, we're giving out hundreds of turkeys today, and my office, in partnership with other elected officials, are giving out hundreds and hundreds of Turkeys throughout my district, along with sides and every-

thing a family needs to make a wonderful Thanksgiving meal for them their friends and family."

On our way into the event, one Tracey Towers resident appeared irritated to see non-Tracey Towers residents waiting in line for turkeys as well. We later spoke to Jean Hill, president of Tracey Towers Tenants Organization, and asked her about the man's comments. "It's on the radio," Hill said. "They broadcast it all over Hot 97. So, people in the community heard it, so they all came over, but you know how many people we have living at Tracey, so really, it's just enough to cover the people that live here."

Hill said the plan was to distribute for as long as they could. "Unfortunately, we can't give to everyone in the neighborhood. Tracey is a huge complex by itself [871 Mitchel Lama apartments]," she said in part. "So, we'll give as many as we can, try to help as many families as we can. We got sides back there to go with the dinner, so we will keep giving, and keep giving, and keep giving. That's all I can do."

We asked, given the crowds, which were causing the inside temperature to rise causing some to sweat, how they were distinguishing residents from nonresidents. Hill said she organized two lines. "I separated by Tracy tenants from my visitors," she said. "I'm checking people off as they come in, so don't try to sneak up and try to make it as fair as possible, and when we finish with all the Tracey people, we'll let in our visitors, and we'll give them as much as we can."

Hill said this would hopefully include Turkey, sides, and leftover gift cards. "We'll keep going until we run out. You know, we try to help as many people in our community as we can, but my Tracey residents have to come first. No disrespect to anybody in the community."

She thanked all the elected officials for pitching in saying not everybody

could bring their produce that day and that other giveaways were being organized on other days. Asked if people were generally appreciative of the event, she said, "Listen, some will be, some won't." She said some people had said to her they had been in line since six o'clock that morning and she had tell them, "Yeah, but you don't live here, so I have to accommodate my people who live here first, and hopefully there's something left over for you, but it is what it is."

We asked one woman waiting in line how she heard about the event. Speaking in Spanish, she said, "At a school in the South Bronx, they sent a message." Asked how she found the cost of food this year, compared to others, she said, "The cost is higher than before." She added that she found the price of rice, sugar, and eggs in particular, to be higher.

Rob Morgan came all the way from Brooklyn for the event. Asked if there were local turkey giveaways where he lived, he said, "Yes, very well organized. WBSL showed up, spreading the love to the community." Asked if he felt more were needed, he said, "It's definitely positive for the neighborhood and for the people to be looked out for during the holiday season."

We also spoke to Diana Morales who said she lives on East Gun Hill Road, has two kids, and saw a flier about the giveaway and decided to come over to save some money. Asked if she'd noticed a rise in the cost of food, she said, "Yes, definitely a huge increase."

She said she still buys at Costco because it's a little more affordable but even there, she has found that an Asian product called "edmame" (like soya beans) that her kids like has doubled, with one bag which she said used to cost \$7, now selling for \$13/14. Morales said she doesn't get food stamps because she's not eligible and that it's hard. "Since my daughter had surgery, I stopped working, so it's just my husband who is working now," she said.

She said social media was good for finding food pantries and events. "I'm glad this was near where I live," Morales said, adding that she felt a lot of giveaways / pantries were not local and were in "Hunts Point or Tremont" or "Manhattan." She added, "So, I've very glad they decided to host this, this year."

Another man whose gave his name as Born Original, and who was from Edenwald Projects, said he heard about the event through word of mouth and on Hot 97. Asked if he had a family, he said, "Yes, I have a wife, kids, a mother, sisters, uncles, aunts, brothers – big family."

Asked for his thoughts on the giveaway, he said, "It was festive. It was nice, entertaining, it was plentiful, and it was a blessing coming into 2024. Everyone was able to get what they needed. Love is in the air. It's for the culture. It's always a blessing when the government or people can come by and help for the holidays, as they did."



Photo by Sile Moloney

**PEOPLE WAIT IN** line inside Tracey Towers in Bedford Park for a free turkey during a Thanksgiving giveaway on Nov. 16, 2023.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Fare-Free Bus Pilot

The MTA launched its fare-free bus pilot program on Sept. 24 on five routes, one in each borough, for a period of six to 12 months. In The Bronx, Bx18A/B operates daily from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. in a loop, serving Undercliff Avenue or Sedgwick Avenue, Grand Concourse/East 170th Street, Macombs Road, Tremont Avenue, 168th Street and 170th Street. It serves Morris Heights, Highbridge and Mount Eden neighborhoods and connects to the trains and several other bus routes. Visit <https://new.mta.info/press-release/mta-fare-free-bus-pilot-launches-five-routes-sunday-sept-24> for more information.

## Unused Commissary Funds

NYC Department of Correction (DOC) is advising formerly incarcerated individuals that the procedure for reclaiming any unused commissary funds has changed with immediate effect. According to DOC, only the released individual can claim the funds, and can do so in person

and receive cash at a DOC Cashiers Window at Rikers Island Central Cashiers, Manhattan Court, or Brooklyn Court for amounts of up to \$200. Photo ID, a New York State ID number, a former book / case number, a valid, physical address, and active contact number (if receiving funds exceeding \$200) must be provided to claim the funds. Funds exceeding \$200 will be paid by check. The portal to input the request can be accessed at [on.nyc.gov/3MQndmG](https://on.nyc.gov/3MQndmG). Commissary Reports are also available at [on.nyc.gov/3R3bIup](https://on.nyc.gov/3R3bIup).

## Heat Season

Oct. 1 marked the official start of the winter heating season, the citywide period through May 31 in which New York City building owners must maintain an indoor temperature of at least 68 degrees between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., when it's below 55 degrees outside. Click [here](#) for more information on what to do if you lose heat or hot water at home. From 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., indoor temperature must be at least 62 degrees, regard-

less of the temperature outside.

Hot water must be kept at a minimum temperature of 120 degrees at the source, year-round. NYCHA residents experiencing issues with heat or hot water should call the Customer Contact Center at (718) 707-7771 or report the issue via the MyNYCHA mobile app or web version. Full details on NYCHA's preparation for this heating season are available here: <https://on.nyc.gov/3SK31Df>.

## Apply for Citizens NYC 2024 Grants

Applications are now open to apply for Citizens NYC 2024 grants of up to \$3,000 for community projects and up to \$5,000 for small businesses. The closing date is Friday, March 31, 2024. Winners will be selected and grants will be distributed in the summer of 2024. Learn more and apply at [www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org).

## Ombudsperson Call Center for Unresolved Repair Issues

Do you have an existing and/or unresolved mold or leak complaint that you need help with? The Ombudsperson Call Center (OCC) is independent of NYCHA and receives complaints by residents who have contacted NYCHA about repair issues but still have concerns regarding mold, leaks and any associated repairs that have not been completed properly or on time. Get in touch with the Ombudsperson Call Center by phone on 1-888-341-7152 to get it resolved, or submit a ticket online at <https://on.nyc.gov/37KvvH0>.

## Calling All Neighborhood History Keepers

The Bronx Historical Society and Columbia University, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is looking to five neighborhood history keepers for a special history project running from November 2023 to March 2025. You'll be paid \$30 per hour for your work and receive free training and support. You'll be based in Mott Haven and will be required to devote about 15 hours a month to the project. Call Amy Starecheski on (212) 851 4395 or email [aas39@columbia.edu](mailto:aas39@columbia.edu).

**RFP Open for Orchard Beach**  
NYC Parks & Recreation an-

nounced Oct. 27 it is accepting Requests for Proposals for the development, operation and maintenance of a restaurant, snack bar and merchandise concessions at the Orchard Beach Pavilion in Pelham Bay Park. Visit [www.nyc/parks](http://www.nyc/parks) for more information. The solicitation number is X39-SB-R-2023.

## RFP Open for Kingsbridge Armory

NYC Economic Development Corporation is accepting Requests for Proposals for the development of the Kingsbridge Armory in Kingsbridge Heights. The deadline to apply is Jan. 18, 2024, at 11.59 p.m. For more information, visit <https://edc.nyc/kingsbridge-armory-redevelopment-rfp>.

## RFP for Stables at Van Cortlandt Park

NYC Department of Parks & Recreation is accepting Requests for Proposals for the renovation, operation, and maintenance of riding stables at Van Cortlandt Park, The Bronx since Friday, Oct. 27. The Solicitation Number is # X92-D-ST-2023. For more information, visit <https://files.constantcontact.com/b392c2a4701/56919ae7-9c94-4c04-aed1-53878b83dc9b.pdf?rdr=true>.

## Calling All Veterans & Families of Veterans

The Bronx Historical Society is calling on all veterans to share their stories with the society to create an archive and pay tribute to the struggles, lives and sacrifices of veterans. Contact [librarian@bronxhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:librarian@bronxhistoricalsociety.org) or call (718) 881 8900 Ext. 105.

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) launched an affordable housing lottery for units at 3073 Barker Avenue in Olinville with a closing date of Nov. 15, and another for units at 1429 East Gun Hill Road on the border of Pelham Gardens/The Valley, with a closing date of Dec. 7. Visit [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org) and search for "affordable housing" for more information

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# Out & About

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## EVENTS

**The Holiday Train Show®** at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10458-5126, runs from Nov. 17, 2023, to Jan. 15, 2024, with *more* trains, and an all-new, *outdoor* train display. Start on the lawn to capture your perfect holiday photos at NYBG's outdoor mountainscape and then watch model trains zip past nearly 200 iconic New York landmark models under the warmth of the conservatory. For more information, visit <https://www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show/>.

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) and Friends of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP) are inviting residents to their **Annual Tree-Lighting Event** on Thursday, Dec. 7, at 6 p.m. on Mosholu Parkland and Bainbridge Avenue. Enjoy hot chocolate, holiday activities, and festive musical performances.

## MUSIC

Michael Spierman, founder/conductor

of The Orchestra of The Bronx, presents **Handel's Messiah**, joined by The Bronx Opera Chorus and guest readers on, Sunday, Dec. 10, at 3 p.m. at the Lovinger Theater/Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Blvd. West, Bronx, NY. Admission is free and no reservations are necessary. For more information, call (929) 222-3973.

## KIDS

The Bronx Museum, located at 1040 Grand Concourse [at 165th Street], Bronx, NY 10456, is hosting a **Family Day: Winter Wonderland** on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Celebrate the holiday season! Join for an afternoon filled with free and festive wintry, art-making activities for the whole family.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

On Saturday, Dec. 16, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., Erika Shallcross, owner of New York Portrait Company, will showcase her **"Made in The Bronx"** photography exhibit as a special one-day-only event at the Andrew Freedman Home, 1125 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10452 (at 166th street, a short walk from the 161st Street – Yankee stadium

stop on the 4 train). Participating photographed seniors are from all over The Bronx, and most have lived here for most, if not all, their lives. Audio snippets from participants will enhance the images (playable via QR code on your personal mobile device). This is a FREE exhibit. Visit <https://www.newyorkportraitcompany.com/> for more information.

Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture's **"Born in The Bronx: The Beginning of Global Hip Hop Culture,"** a stunning exhibition curated by Johan Kugelberg and Joe Conzo Jr. which explores the roots and evolution of Hip Hop, the global phenomenon that originated in the South Bronx in the 1970s, opens Wednesday, Nov. 15, at 6 p.m. at the Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos, 450 Grand Concourse, off 149th Street. Admission is free. RSVP on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/754054616657?aff=oddttdtcreator> or call (718) 518-4455.

## MOVEMENT

On Nov. 21, NYC Parks began offering free public tours of **Hart**

**Island**, the City's public cemetery since 1869, and the country's largest. It is the final resting place of over one million individuals. The tours aim to enhance access to the island, reduce historical stigmas surrounding its past, and educate the public about its role as an important piece of City infrastructure. NYC Parks' Urban Park Rangers offer free walking tours of the island twice per month. Registration is required through an online form and participants are selected by lottery. All public history tours are carried out on foot, and last around 2.5 hours, with ferry transportation provided to and from Hart Island.

The next tour dates are Dec. 5 and Dec. 19, 2023, and then Jan. 16, Jan. 30, Feb. 13, Feb. 27, March 12, March 26, April 9, April 23, May 14, and May 28. The tours will encompass the history of the Island, including how it became a municipal cemetery, wildlife and natural aspects, the burial process, and island advocacy. More information on public Hart Island tours can be found on this page <https://www.nyc.gov/site/hartisland/index.page>.

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## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place in December (date tbc). 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 (CB7)** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 28, at 6.30 p.m. at P.S. 246, Poe Center, 2641 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board meeting will be held in December (date tbc). Contact [BX08@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:BX08@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

The next **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m. Usually, the meetings are held at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (Lobby Floor). For more details, please contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## CORRECTION

In the Norwood News print edition dated Nov. 9-22, 2023, in the page 13 story entitled, "Fordham Manor: Politicians Show Up for Senior Night," we omitted to mention that in addition to those mentioned in the story, the event was also cosponsored by Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14) and Councilmember Oswald Feliz (C.D. 15). Also, the headline incorrectly referenced that the event was held in Fordham Manor, whereas, as reported in the story, it was actually held in Kingsbridge Heights. We apologize for these omissions/errors.

## Jean Hill Honored as Pillar of the Community

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Longtime Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) member and current chair of the CB7 Budget, Personnel & Ethics Committee, Jean Hill, was recently honored by New York City Mayor Eric Adams, receiving a certificate of recognition in acknowledgment of her "proud status as a pillar of the community."

The award was presented to Hill during the most recent Bronx CB7

general board meeting, held at Monroe College in Fordham Manor, on Oct. 24, by **Alina Dowe**, Bronx borough director of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, in the presence of other CB7 board members, elected officials, and members of the public.

In addition to her current role as chair of the budget committee, Hill has served in a variety of other roles over the years with CB7, including as chair of the board. She is also the longtime president of Tracey Towers Tenants Organization.

Tracey Towers comprises two Mitchell Lama housing tower blocks comprising 871 units located in Bedford Park and is home to a mix of both long-

time Bronxites and first-generation immigrants, many from Ghana, as previously reported. Hill recently helped coordinate a turkey giveaway at Tracey Towers, hosted and sponsored by both local elected officials and other partner organizations, ahead of Thanksgiving.

Bronx CB7 District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera said of Hill, "Bronx CB7 is blessed to have great board members who do not only volunteer their time with us at the board but are also civically engaged and dedicated to the improvement of their respective neighborhood/block. Jean Hill's recognition as a pillar of the community is well deserved."

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# "Tracy 168" Honored

(continued from page 1)

death. The first was held a few weeks ago on Nov. 4, which she said she had attempted to cancel at the last minute due to two unrelated deaths in her own family.

Of Tracy, Mangeo told *Norwood News*, "We grew up together as kids." She said they both attended Wildwood Junior High School 143, which, we understand, is now The New School for Leadership and Journalism, located at 120 West 231<sup>st</sup> Street in Van Cortlandt Village.

Mangeo continued, "Our teachers allowed him to come in and talk about graffiti, how to do graffiti, and where and how it started." She explained that although Tracy was still a student at the time, he would be invited to different classes to talk to students about his work on the then-still emerging artform which coincided with the prevailing emergence of Hip Hop.

The poignancy of losing Tracy during the year that the latter celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is not lost on his friends. According to reporting by The New York Times on Oct. 26, Tracy's work was later featured in exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum and at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Mangeo said of the vigil in Tracy's memory, "I just felt we owed Tracy this because he gave us his best artwork growing up and it was something for us to look at, and I just felt I had to do this for him."

According to an obituary on rockthebells.com, a website and "preeminent voice for classic and timeless Hip Hop," which focuses on honoring the culture and the core elements of Hip Hop i.e. MCs, DJs, breakdancers, graffiti artists and more, Tracy was born on Feb. 14, 1958 in The Bronx.

According to the article, as a kid, he spent three days a week in Manhattan with his Puerto Rican grandfather, and four days with his Irish mother in The Bronx.

Although Mangeo, herself, was not "a writer," a term graffiti artists use to describe themselves, she said, "I just hung out with all of them." She added, "I went to Junior High School 80 [in Norwood] and then I went to 143 so yeah, we played hooky in that Oval."

One graffiti writer from Woodlawn, who declined to be identified and who also attended the memorial event, was asked about the writer's signature "Wild Style" graffiti for which Tracy was known. "That's his clique, Wild Style," he said. "You had to have Wild Style letters to go into his crew. You couldn't be just a regular graffiti writer; you had to be Wild Style."

Patrick AKA "Styx 1," a former member of the "X Vandals" and former Norwood resident, said of Tracy, "He painted his first mural down there on Webster [Avenue] back in maybe '78 at French Charley's Bar. He painted that. I watched him paint the whole thing. That's how I first met him."

Although the Nov. 4 gathering was cancelled, nearly a dozen people showed up anyway. One-time graffiti artist and Norwood resident, Jerry Landon, now a member of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Community Council, recalled knowing Tracy. "It's interesting to me because he was the original guy... but a lot of people don't know about him," he said.

Also, at the Nov. 4 gathering was William Hightower, AKA "Dollar Bill," a former graffiti artist and break dancer who met Tracy in 1974. He recalled



Photo obtained via social media

**A SOCIAL MEDIA** post announcing the first of two memorials held in memory of graffiti artist Michael Tracy in Norwood in November 2023 includes an older photo of the writer alongside some of his artwork

hanging out with Tracy at the trainyard at West 205th Street. "I was the lookout, and I had to stay on top of the fence while they went down, and I could see everything," he said.

Reflecting further on his graffiti days, Hightower told *Norwood News*, "I remember in the beginning, starting out, I was lookout, you know? You don't just start hitting the train up. You've got to work up to do the outline [of the artwork], and you'd be blessed to be the outline and to be able to color, you've got to be able to color inside good."

Hightower was asked about the similarities between Tracy's life and the life of a character in the 1983 film, "Wild Style." In an undated Associated Press article, Tracy was interviewed and told the reporter he would offer to paint anyone's name on a New York City Subway

Train for \$25.

In the 'Wild Style' movie, a journalist follows a graffiti artist around who paints an amphitheater before a Hip-Hop concert. Hightower replied, "A lot of us were not compensated; there's a lot of graffiti writers. There's a lot of B-Boys [breakdancers] who haven't been compensated."

Tracy's son, Sean, is expected to hold a traditional memorial service on Staten Island for his father in December. Coincidentally, "Style Wars 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" the 1983 PBS film, will be spotlighted at the Museum of The City of New York on Thursday, Dec. 7, and will feature "Lady Pink" and Ken Swift, both involved in the film, "Wild Style." For more information, visit <https://www.mcny.org/event>.

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Photo by David Greene

**A CROWD OF** about 50 people gather to honor graffiti artist Michael Tracy during a vigil held on Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023.



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