



# NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo by Sile Moloney

**STEPHEN, 12, AND** best friend, Joshua, 15, raised the alert when a fire broke out at Stephen's home located at 112 East 198<sup>th</sup> Street in Bedford Park on Nov. 20, 2023, and assisted evacuating family members, including a 5-month-old baby.

## BY SILE MOLONEY

A 12-year-old boy, Stephen, saved a 5-month-old baby from a burning home that raged for about two hours on Nov. 20 in Bedford Park, aided by his 15-year-old best friend, Joshua, who lives next door, while fire

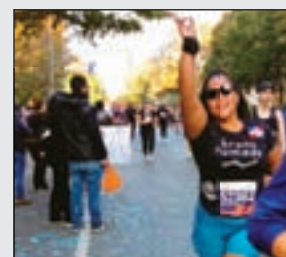
fighters responded to the blaze, the second of two fires, one fatal, on the same evening in Bronx Community District 7.

Describing what happened at the residential home at 112 East 198<sup>th</sup> Street, with the permission of his parent, Stephen

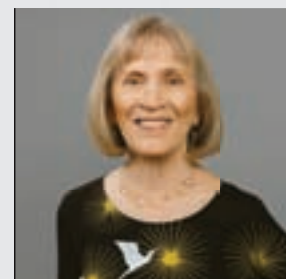
told *Norwood News*, "So what happened was I was playing my game and I smelled fire, so I went to the back [of the house] and somebody said that a lighter fell down, and that was what triggered it, and that's actually what caught fire."

He continued, "So, then my dad called the fire department. Then, once I go out, like fire went into my...the kitchen before we left. Like I was the first one out with a baby, like I had a five-month-old baby in my

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# NORWOOD NEWS

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# Annual Veterans Day Commemoration Held at Bronx Victory Memorial

**By SILE MOLONEY**

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) members were joined by veterans, residents of the district, Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) members, and others for their 2nd Annual Veterans Day Commemoration held at the Bronx Victory Memorial on Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park to mark Veterans Day.

The event was held on Saturday, Nov. 18, and among the local veterans in attendance and thanked for their service on the day were Anthony Rivieccio, founder of the Northwest Bronx Democrats, Duval S. Guerino, who served from 2000 to 2004 in Darmstadt, Germany, Dave Laguer, a former 3<sup>rd</sup> vice chair of Bronx CB7, and Pastor Crespo Jr., research librarian/archivist with the Bronx Historical Society.

CB7 veterans committee chair Chad Royer thanked the veterans during his prepared remarks, and Crespo Jr., CB7 budget and ethics committee chair Jean Hill and Sirio Guerino, father of Duval S. Guerino, also addressed those gathered.

“Our U.S. veterans are members of our community who served our country in an effort to uphold our national security and to ensure the freedoms we have, and are often taken for granted,” Royer said. “Some are here in good and not-so-good health, while others have lost their lives. Some of our veterans are homeless, dealing with housing issues, affected by food insecurities, dealing with life-long injuries, reliving the trauma that they encountered during service, living paycheck to paycheck, facing financial hardship.”

He encouraged civilians “to try to understand the mission and be part of the solution.” Addressing elected and appointed leaders in government, he then said, “We need your help and we need it now. I want to give a special thank you to Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, our city council, and our very own Bronx Community Board 7 for the support behind the passing of Resolution 581. As per the resolution, November is now Veterans Appreciation Month.”

During his remarks, Crespo Jr., who said he spent 20 years serving in the military, called on the families of veterans to share their stories with the Bronx Historical Society for preservation. “When we look at veterans, we only see that veteran and the sacrifices he [she and they] did, but we forget about those family members who deal without their spouses for months on end, those family members that are dragged on tour every two to three years,” he said, in part.

Crespo Jr. continued, in part, “Their



Photo courtesy of AJ Ramos

**MEMBERS OF BRONX** Community Board 7, veterans, and residents gather at the Bronx Victory Memorial on Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Commemoration on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023.

children have to get up and restart their lives every two to three years. I had a great time but my spouse... the difficulty of going overseas, not speaking a language, not having a career...so the Bronx Veterans Archive is to capture oral histories in the testimonies of these veterans, their family members, and the civilians that, alongside us, serve.”

He added, “Veterans are not synonymous with mental health. We deal with a lot, but so do our first responders, so what we want to do and our goal is to humanize that veteran. Another way that we’re archiving their history is by collecting donations of documents of the times they served, photographs... what they accomplished.”

Once again, Barbara Stronczer, chair of CB7’s Parks committee, shared some of the history behind the Bronx Victory Memorial monument up to 1988, at which point it had been in a poor state of repair.

Rivieccio, who, like others, has been honored by different elected officials over the years for his military service, shared some more recent additional history on the site. “In 2007, three [organizations], BMCA, Northwest Bronx Democrats, and Norwood Against Graffiti\* (Guerinos Against Graffiti\*) lobbied then (CD11) Councilman Oliver Koppell to clean it up,” he told *Norwood News*.

“He allocated \$1 million,” Rivieccio said, adding that it was later cleaned in 2009.

“Then, the three groups lobbied, in 2011, for an illumination of the monument,” he added, saying this cost \$500,000 and that Koppell also secured that funding. He continued, “From 2012 on, we all lobbied CB7 to reinstitute events back at the monument. [This] finally restarted in 2012.”

Sirio Guerino later said of veterans, “Thank you for protecting our country. Every day should be Veterans Day.” Before thanking Royer for advocating for veterans, he then addressed the public, saying, “If you know a veteran or not, please assist them anyway you can.”

Other CB7 veterans committee members present at the event were Emmanuel Asamoah and Hugo Gonzalez. CB7 board chair Yajaira Arias and District Manager Karla Cabrera-Carrera, and CB7 members, Stronczer, Samantha Souvatzis, and Leury Acosta were also in attendance. No elected officials were present, though they had been invited. Many had attended Van Cortlandt Park’s 17th Annual Veterans Day Ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 5, as reported.

The New York Gray Cadets band, overseen by Laguer, delighted those gathered with a musical performance and military procession.

In Manhattan, Veterans Day was a slightly more subdued affair this year, with seemingly less people in attendance for the annual Veterans Day pa-

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## INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their opinion on the impact on City agencies of the latest budget cuts announced by Mayor Eric Adams in mid-November.



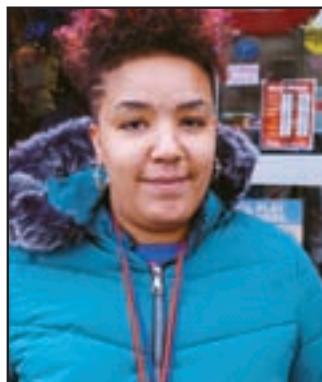
"The impact it will have on the minority groups, the impact that it will have on senior citizens....and it's just going to get worse, so I hope they will consider these populations before making certain cuts because they're the neediest. Minorities need a lot of assistance but senior citizens - they really, really need help."

**Luis Galvan,**  
University Heights  
Photo by David Greene



"I'm concerned about all the budget cuts, but I also understand from listening to the mayor, he doesn't have control over a lot of stuff. People think he's spending this money on the immigrants. He doesn't have control over that. He couldn't stop them. We're at a standstill. We need more cops. We don't need school cuts. We'll do the best we can with what we have. Like, he said we're looking for \$12 billion. [U.S. President Joe] Biden needs to help us."

**Yvette Williams,**  
Baychester  
Photo by David Greene



"I feel like it's only 5%, but it still makes me worry about people's safety in the community because they're taking away the incomes of important people like police officers. Like, I don't have a job right now. The world must evolve. You have to make change, right? People need the help of other people."

**Lashonda Soto,**  
Parkchester  
Photo by David Greene



"I feel there shouldn't be cuts because you've got children that really need a place to go to after school to brush up on their reading. I'm most concerned about children's education and places for homeless people to live. Why should they do that? People have their own concerns and rights like coming to the public library on Sunday. Everybody has the right to a library."

**Derrick Rumley,**  
Yonkers, NY, visiting Kingsbridge  
Photo by David Greene



"I just came out of homelessness so it might affect me and people like me in certain ways, and I don't think it's fair. I hope they can get some money from the federal government. I don't think they should cut anything else; it's not helping anybody in any way. Can they change the law on housing immigrants? If they can, I think they should."

**Ashley Corrao,**  
Kingsbridge  
Photo courtesy of Ashley Corrao

*Editor's Note: There is no indication from City officials that the salaries of existing City employees will be cut, but it is expected that fewer new police officers, for example, will be hired as a result of the cuts, along with other service impacts.*

## Mayor Eric Adams addresses Impending Budget Cuts at Town Hall

By DAVID GREENE

During an event with senior citizens at JASA Bay Eden Older Adult Center in the northeast Bronx on Thursday, Nov. 30, Mayor Eric Adams addressed "the pink elephant in the room," fielding questions on the recently announced budget cuts to all city agencies and defending himself regarding an allegation of sexual assault filed in a recent civil lawsuit, as well as a separate federal investigation into his campaign finances in 2021.

Adams was joined at the center, located at 1220 East 229th Street in Edenwald, by nearly a dozen heads of city agencies and local officials for his fifth town hall held at various city senior centers. Adams said at the four other senior town halls that the number one issue facing the administration was the influx of migrant workers and asylum seekers to the city.

He told the crowd, "Every time we go to the town hall, people say, 'Okay, why don't you just stop the flow in?' I can't. It's against the law. I don't have the authority to do that."

The mayor continued, "People say that we are giving more to immigrant and asylum seekers that we are giving to long-term New Yorkers. That is not true. There are benefits that are for long-term New Yorkers that migrant and asylum seekers are not allowed to get, based on law and policies."

Adams pointed out that the migrant crisis has cost the City \$7 billion in this



Photo by David Greene

**DURING A TOWN** hall meeting held on Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, at JASA Bay Eden Older Adult Center in Edenwald in the northeast Bronx, Mayor Eric Adams says asylum seekers have so far cost the city \$7 billion, and every city agency is required to make the necessary cuts to close the city's budget gap.

fiscal year alone. "This was dropped in our lap," he added. "We've been asking for help for over a year now, and our voices are not being heard in Washington D.C."

Addressing the civil suit, Adams told the crowd, "There was an allegation made against me by someone 30-something years ago. I don't know who the woman is." He added, "The allegation did not happen. It is not true, and I don't even know what the allegation is to be honest with you."

Adams continued, "And the second thing is the investigation with the [U.S.] Justice Department, based on the actions I took with the Turkish embassy.

I reached out to the fire department as the borough president, and I asked the fire commissioner to look into what was holding the permit process for the embassy. That was the extent of my inquiry." The mayor added that he would be cooperating with the investigation.

Adams' first question from the crowd was, "Are you proposing budget cuts that will directly affect senior centers throughout the city?" Adams passed the question to Lorraine Cortes-Vasquez, commissioner for the aging, who responded, "We've been housing over a hundred thousand people now, 60,000 are on a regular basis. That costs money, and so that means that all agencies have

had to face a budget cut."

Cortes-Vasquez continued, "I can tell you that at New York City Aging, we are looking at everything possible so that we do not cut older adult clubs at this time. I can't talk to you about the future and what that brings, but we are also making sure that we do not impact home delivered meals, and we're looking at transportation and home care with the same commitment."

Adams said that out of his \$106 billion city budget, about \$76 billion "is locked in," and the \$12 billion in cuts would have to come from the remaining \$30 billion. He added, "We are in a predicament; we have to balance the budget for two years by law."

Longtime Gun Hill Road resident Barbara Gibson, 84, said after the mayor's visit, "It was a pleasure to have him come to the Boogie-Down Bronx to listen to our problems, but will some of these problems be addressed?"

Retired nurse and Williamsbridge resident, Kathleen George, told *Norwood News* that she was concerned with scooter riders driving on the sidewalks, a topic that was addressed at the town hall. Asked if she was feeling hopeful after what she heard, George replied, "Yeah, we'll wait and see and hope something positive comes out of it."

Neither Adams nor any member of his campaign team has been accused of any criminal wrongdoing.

The mayor denies any wrongdoing in relation to the civil lawsuit.



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# Who Runs the World? Part II Karina Jorge

By SÍLE MOLONEY

*Editor's Note: Our intention was to publish this story in an earlier edition, but election coverage took precedence. Part I of this story ran in our last 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.

Karina Jorge, 41, mom to a 6-year-old daughter and an 11-year-old son, is also a marathoner a few times over. We asked Jorge how she first got into running and what drove her to want to run a marathon initially. "So, I work in athletics," she said, adding that she's an assistant athletic director at the City College of New York, where she works on compliance and eligibility for student athletes.

"Some of my colleagues had always tried to get me to run with them or run a 5k, and I'd always said no, but one day, I woke up and I laced up," she said. "I put on some sneakers and I ran-walked in my neighborhood. It was a very stressful week, so I just decided to go for a run before heading to the office. I said, you know what? Let me try this. Everybody says it's good for mental health. So, I did it. And I haven't stopped and that was in 2018!"

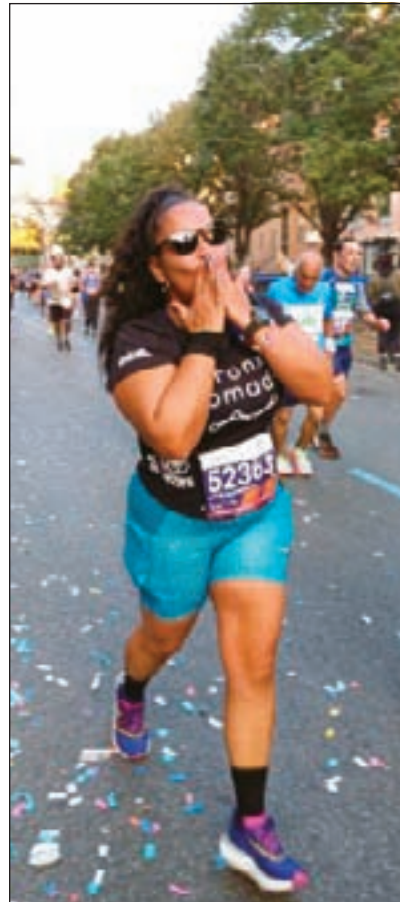
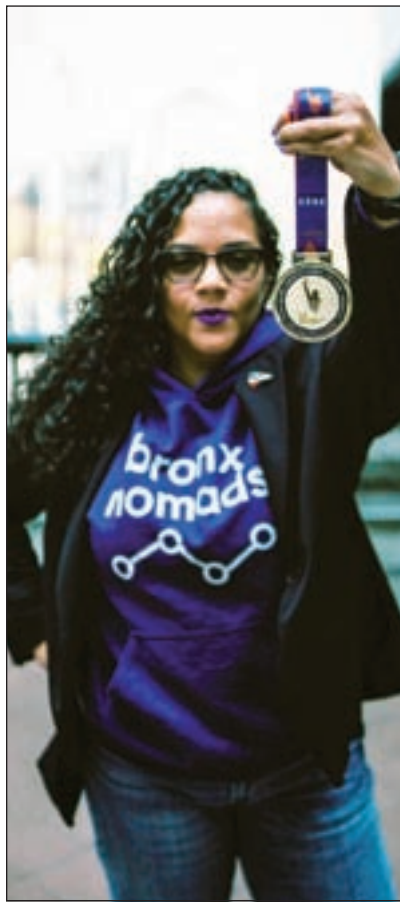
Asked *when* she runs, Jorge said she prefers mornings to try to fit it into her daily itinerary. "Sometimes, it's in the evenings due to work, but for the most part, I run in the mornings. I'm a single mom; I have to drop them off at school, and then I go run," she said.

We asked about her training schedule leading up to the marathon. "So, I follow usually a 16 to 18-week training plan. I began sometime in July." Jorge said she completed her shorter runs (3 and 5 miles) during the week, along with some track workouts midweek at the park, and her long morning runs were on the weekends. "So, a typical week for me, it's 25 to 35 miles during marathon training," she said. "Sometimes, it goes up a little higher."

We asked what it was like crossing the finish line during her first marathon. "Oh, my God, that feeling!" she said. "I can't put it into words, crossing that finish line, having the support of my children at mile 20, knowing that I had to get to mile 20, and then seeing them, I was like, I have to make it to the end!"

She added, "It was an amazing feeling of accomplishment, of putting myself through something that I had never thought I would do, and actually seeing it come to fruition, and completing it was just an amazing feeling."

Jorge said it was also the best way she saw New York. "I was not born here, but my siblings, my parents, brothers, and sisters would always come in and I was the designated tour guide, so I felt



Photos courtesy of Wilton Tejada and Ernest Pierre-Louis

**KARINA JORGE OF** Norwood-based running group Bronx Nomads runs through The Bronx during the 2023 TCS New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, as her fellow runners cheer her on, and later with her medal.

like I was on my own tour of New York City that first year, and I was just seeing it from a different perspective," she said.

"The support that you get from strangers was amazing, the tears and everything. So, it was an amazing feeling crossing that finish line. I can barely describe it. I just feel it."

We asked Jorge how she overcomes the mental challenge of having 26 miles ahead of her even if, physically, she has trained for it. She said this year was the first time she trained for some of her longer runs with others. "Last year, I ran all of them by myself and that actually helped me a lot because I was able to find different tools, some things that I can do right in that moment where I'm in mile 20/21," she said. These included reminding herself *why* she was running.

"I also find other things to do," Jorge said. "I'll listen to a book and listen to music. Sometimes, I just listen to my surroundings if I go running the Putnam Trail or in Van Cortlandt." She said she draws on different things like focusing on the sounds of nature.

"I can't just listen to music the entire time; it gets a little boring," Jorge said. "It's more finding my reason for running." One of these reasons, she said, is to run in the streets to show girls who look like her that they can also run. "I usually run with my hair curly, out," she said. "I tie it up so that they know that

they can also participate in something like this and everyone can do it."

We asked Jorge about the support from Bronx Nomads. She said she initially started running on my own, not knowing running was a thing in The Bronx, nor how accessible it was to sign up for races. "I had seen other groups in other boroughs, and I had seen races," she said. "I found Bronx Nomads and unfortunately, the pandemic came about and I couldn't join them because they had shut down their meet ups."

She said later when she was visiting her parents in the Dominican Republic, she got a phone call from the group telling her they had gotten an entry for her for the marathon. Laughing, she said she hadn't planned to run it in 2021 as she had deferred to 2022. "I just started training immediately in the Dominican Republic and then I came here, and I continued my training," she said.

Jorge said the group has also helped her maintain her motivation and stopped her from getting bored, especially other runners who have advanced along their running journeys. "If they're competitive, in that way, it has been very helpful because you learn from all the different levels," she said, adding that it was a great community.

"We have walkers, run-walkers," she said. "We have our kids that go on and participate in our meet ups. So, I've really enjoyed my time with Bronx No-

mads. They've been the most supportive to me. Not only am I running, but as a single mom, I've had to rely on them for holding my children sometimes. Certain individuals have helped me as I'm racing."

She added, "We've created that community where we support each other not only in the running. It's been great. I recently became one of the pacers for them so I've also evolved in my running, and I've been able to help others."

We asked if it also helped her sleep. "Yeah, I feel like it relieves a lot of my everyday..." she said. "I don't have a typical nine to five. I can work any hour of the day, 11 to 7, weekends, holidays, so that tends to be a lot when it overlaps with the home or personal. I do think it helps a lot with your physical and your mental, and how well you can clear your mind and just have better rest, because rest is part of the journey, and the running / training as well."

Jorge said, overall, her health has been better since she started running. "I've kept off 60 pounds; that's also a major plus!" she said. Asked if she had advice for anyone who might be contemplating starting to run. "One thing I hear all the time is, 'I'm not a runner, obviously,' We all have it in us to get there. You could start by walking. You could start by just moving, so, I would say movement is very important. Just move, because once we stay still, we become stagnant and our health, our fitness definitely suffers," she said.

"I would say to someone that wants to run a marathon; I think it's for everyone. We all have the same opportunity, and I think we all should just give it a shot, and we're here to support and help in any way. I had a friend that just reached out to me today, and she wants to get back into running. She ran one marathon over 10 years ago, and she said, 'Karina, how can we do this?' I was like, 'Meet me on Mondays.'"

Jorge said aside from being great for both mental and physical health, the best part for her has been community. "Meeting new people and getting to connect with people at that level where you get support from people you don't know, and you create that connection," she said.

"I know more people in other boroughs than I've ever known in my 30 years of living in New York City just through the sport of running, so you become part of this great supportive community, and everyone's welcome to join."

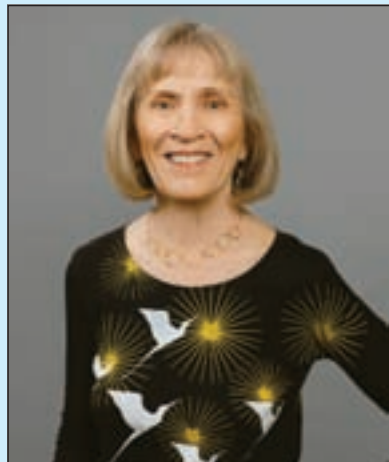
According to New York Road Runners, there were 51,933 starters in this year's marathon and 51,402 finishers, of which 28,501 were men, 22,807 were women and 94 were non-binary. 16,748 finishers were international runners, with 148 countries represented. Fifty U.S. states, plus Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam were represented.

In the men's open division, the winner was Tamirat Tola of Ethiopia with a time of 2:04:58 and the women's open division winner was Hellen Obiri of Kenya with a time of 2:27:23.



# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY



Photos courtesy of Professor Claudia Goldin  
**PROFESSOR CLAUDIA GOLDIN**, Nobel Prize winner in economics, in a recent photo and at age 2 or 3 in Parkchester, The Bronx.

## Claudia Goldin, Bronx H.S. of Science Alum, Wins Nobel Prize

The Bronx High School of Science has congratulated the school's Hall of Famer Claudia Goldin, Class of 1963, on winning the Nobel Prize in Economics! Described by the school as a trail-blazer throughout her career, Goldin is currently an economics professor at Harvard University and was the first woman to be offered tenure in that department. According to the school, her research focuses on the female labor force and economic inequality. An economic historian, school officials said Goldin's research looks throughout history to understand and explain current issues. They said she is only the third woman to win the Nobel Prize in Economics and the first to be awarded as an individual, not as part of a group. They said Goldin is the ninth Bronx Science alum to win the Nobel Prize.

## Unknown Reason for Post Office Reopening Delay

Following the closure of the Norwood-based post office located at 3464 Jerome Avenue earlier this year, as reported, a USPS representative said at the time, "As a result of a racoon infestation presenting a safety hazard, the Mosholu Finance Station has been temporarily closed since June 13."

The representative added, "The building landlord has been working to abate the infestation and in the interest of USPS continuing service, a mobile unit was placed in front of the site. The mobile unit is currently providing full service and PO Box customers service remains uninterrupted, on-site, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m."

Norwood News followed up with USPS since then on several occasions to ask when the post office would be re-opened. A representative said in part on Nov. 22, "While we would like to return to regular operations at this facility, as tenants of the building, we are limited in our capacity to address pressing safety concerns. We remain hopeful that the landlord will resolve the issue as soon as possible."

The representative continued, "In the meantime, we continue to provide postal services at on-site mobile units. There are three additional postal locations for retail services in the 10467 zip code. For address information of these and any other Post Office visit [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and enter the zip code in our Post Office Finder."

Norwood News duly followed up on Nov. 24 with the building owner, Luna Bros. Realty Corp., with an address at 185 Bridge Plz N, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, and asked what the reason for the delay was. Francisco Sandoval told us he doesn't know what they delay is and that the requested repairs have been carried out.

"You can call the regional manager for the post office," he said. "You ask, 'Why you still outside?' They don't know. You can go over there and say, 'What is the problem that you are still outside, and what is the problem with a facility? There is a leak or some danger that you can't be inside?' And they will tell you, 'No, nothing,' because they know."

Sandoval added, "They're only serving the clients outside but inside, they have all the stands, all the things inside the facility. They use the bathroom. They use everything. They put the money inside. They're using it."

Norwood News followed up the same day and informed USPS of the owner's response and asked for their feedback. As of press date, we had not received a response. We will share any further updates we receive.

## World AIDS Day

NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi held a ceremony in honor of World AIDS Day on Friday, Dec. 1. Jacobi officials said during the ceremony, held annually in Jacobi's Atrium, achievements in HIV/AIDS care were celebrated, tributes were paid to those who died from the disease, and the stigma and discrimination sometimes still felt by those affected by HIV/AIDS was discussed. The theme of World AIDS Day 2023 was "Let communities lead," and highlighted that the programs and initiatives which aim to address the illness and its affects have better results when they are driven by those most impacted by the illness.



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## Letters To The Editor

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

### Israel, Palestine

While the Oct. 7 attacks on southern Israel by Hamas were horrific, they did not come out of nowhere. The fact that Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) argues that we must stand with Israel is very much the problem here, just like [Israeli President Benjamin] Netanyahu, a genocidal maniac, whose cabinet calls for the transferring of Palestinians from their lands.

Conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism is not only wrong, but it is dangerous. Making it impossible to criticize Israel means that there is no reality to any criticisms that one rightly has of Israel and thus, the person must be antisemitic.

The "war" between Hamas and Israel did not begin on October 7; the history of Zionism and Palestinian oppression goes back to 1948 when 750,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes with no right of return. Thousands of people were murdered by Israeli occupation [Aljazeera, May 23, 2017]. Thus, the present war is just a continuation of all the years that led up to it.

The ruling class in this country supports Israel and the press, jointly with the U.S. government, [and] undermines any evidence that Israel is committing war crimes. The Business Standard 12/6/23 wrote that U.S. news network, MSNBC, suspended the shows of three Muslim anchors amid the Israeli war in Gaza.

Any dissent is now met with police force since Israel must be protected so that the arms industry can continue to sell weapons to the Israeli government. AP reported that police and protestors clashed outside the DNC HQ [in Washington D.C.] during a demonstration over the Israel-Hamas War on Nov. 16.

According to the website, arabcenterdc.org, and other sources, the U.S. gives anything between \$3.3 and \$3.8 billion to the Israelis yearly so that they can buy weapons from U.S. manufacturers. The cost is not only the lives of innocent Palestinian children who are being buried under the rubble, but to all the social services that one has a right to receive in this country. The NY Public Library just sent out a notice saying they will have to cut back on Sunday hours and that they will have to buy fewer books. There are shortages in hospitals, schools and in sanitation.

Mayor Adams just said he will be removing garbage cans from the outer boroughs. Moreover, our civil liberties are being curtailed. The Chancellor of the Board of Education announced to the teachers that they will not be allowed to talk about the "war" in their classrooms or on their own social media pages. Finally, unless we learn to see that we must defend the oppressed, there will be more and more upticks in violence against groups that will ultimately be outcasts, and that will include the Jews.

**Carol Lang  
Norwood**

*Editor's Note: There has been broad, on-*

*going, live coverage by the Press on the mounting deaths in Gaza, on the humanitarian crisis affecting those living in the region, as well as on the thousands marching in the streets calling Israel's actions "genocide." The press has also long reported on the human rights violations occurring in Gaza prior to Oct. 7.* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/12/04/biden-gaza-palestinians-protests/> <https://www.politico.eu/article/greta-thunberg-gaza-israel-war-crimes-and-genocide/> <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/11/1212496317/london-gaza-israel-protest-ceasefire-uk> <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/israel-hamas-war-cease-fire-rally-new-york-city/> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/10/14/you-american-taxpayer-are-helping-to-fund-israeli-settlements/>

*NYC Schools Chancellor David C. Banks wrote in November, in part, "All employees should ensure that expressions of their personal political views are kept separate from their NYCPS job." He added, in part, that staff should not express their personal views about political matters during the school day, while on school grounds, or while working at school events, and that it was critical that they set aside their personal views during class discussions about current events. "In general, employees may express their personal views outside of the workday and workplace in a way that does not cause disruption to the employee's school or workplace," he wrote, in part.*

*NYC Department of Sanitation confirmed that due to the recent budget cuts, although the frequency of garbage pick-up will not change, there will indeed be less garbage cans in the outer boroughs.*

### Come to the Table of Plenty

As we enter the holy time of Advent, leading up to the reason for the Christmas season, the birth of Jesus, please visit St. Brendan Church. The website is <https://www.saintbrendanchurch.org>. The Pastor, Fr. Silva, and the Deacon, Paul Hveem, will greet you warmly. You will also learn of the many charitable events being held for our beloved community such as food drives and toy collections for our children, in conjunction with the 52nd Precinct.

Other events are blood drives, trips, and fraternal meetings. Whatever faith you practice, and for those of no faith, please reach out to others who might need some type of assistance or are in need. If everyone does a little for others, no one will have to do a lot! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Richard Marias  
Norwood**

### Public Library Funding Cuts

The recent announcement about reducing library funding and closing some on Sunday is disappointing. This impacts the New York (Bronx, Manhattan & Staten Island), and Brooklyn and Queens public library systems. During the many cold winter days, NYC opens up warming centers to help New Yorkers get out of the cold. On hot

summer days, NYC opens up cooling centers to assist New Yorkers [get relief from] excessive heat.

Libraries can do the same. Many seniors and others are frequent visitors to their local library. In too many cases, they don't open until noon, close by 6 p.m., or remain shut Saturday and Sunday. Closing libraries on Sundays and reducing library hours on other days due to the multi-billion-dollar, municipal budget shortfall is penny wise and pound foolish. It is a drop in the bucket to reduce this debt.

Just the opposite, all libraries should be open seven days per week, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. all year long. Seniors, retirees, students and others would be appreciative. Every year, the NYC council speaker allocates several hundred million to members for their favorite pet projects. Elected officials can allocate a small portion of their share to keep libraries open for constituents.

After allocating these funds, they are welcome to have their local library post signs by the entrance that "these longer hours including being open on Sunday are thanks to funding provided by your local council members. This just might be the incentive for NYC council members to do the right thing and find the funding necessary to take advantage of this underutilized asset.

Major corporations, local businesses, community development corporations and charities should also be solicited for funding. They can be offered the same acknowledgements.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

### Parking Fines in Van Cortlandt Village / Santos Act

Norwood News Editor Sile Moloney loves to fact check my letters. Her editor's notes tend to prove that she is not very good at it, but she doesn't seem to feel anyone else needs fact-checking.

Nat Weiner claims that the no-standing sign on a scaffold on Van Cortlandt Park South near Gouverneur Avenue has been there a while and claims a Google map photo shows that sign with snow on the ground. I found that photo (from February 2022) and have attached it with this letter. There's snow, a parked car, and the scaffold, but no sign of any kind. To paraphrase a line from "Cahill, United States Marshall" by George Kennedy, "I looked but it just wasn't there." I suggest that Moloney give everyone the same scrutiny that she gives me. Also, for her to say that it's okay for a local congressman's opinion on the SANTOS Act to be printed but that she was mistaken to print a letter by a local reader, me, on it, is quite hypocritical. Do the opinions of us peasants not count as much as politicians?

**Richard Warren  
Van Cortlandt Village**

*Editor's Note: Attached are the photos of Van Cortlandt Park South submitted by Mr. Warren with his latest accompanying letter. Attached also is a wider Google Maps image dated February 2022 which shows the No Standing sign to which Mr. Weiner was referring on the right-hand side.*

*Norwood News did not write that we were*



**GOOGLE MAPS STREET** images submitted by Richard Warren of Van Cortlandt Park South, dated February 2022



Images courtesy of Google Maps  
**GOOGLE MAPS STREET** image of Van Cortlandt Park South dated February 2022

*mistaken for publishing the letter by Mr. Warren on the Santos Act. We publish Mr. Warren's letters regularly. Our point is that due to having limited resources, we kindly ask that readers write to us in response to articles published on local issues. We previously reported on comments made by Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) on the Santos Act because he is the local congressman for our reporting area and therefore, that was the local angle to the story.*

*We did not cover the NY3 congressional race between Santos and his Democratic opponent, Zimmerman, nor any aspect of the related campaign finances for this race. Nonetheless, when Mr. Warren wrote about this race, we published his letter. Upon receipt of Mr. Weiner's response to that letter, we later offered an apology, as a courtesy for not having added some context to Mr. Warren's original letter in terms of explaining the rationale as to why Zimmerman chose not to screen Santos further during the NY3 race.*

*This was the point being made by Mr. Weiner in his letter. The apology, therefore, was in response to Mr. Weiner's letter because he highlighted that Norwood News had not provided this context at the time we received Mr. Warren's original letter, context which, we acknowledge, would have been helpful to readers.*

### Michael Tracy Article & Santos Act

I object to the way the *Norwood News* article on Michael Tracy seemingly defies him. Graffiti on trains and buses was not art; it was the destruction of public property and a crime. Graffiti made it next to impossible (sometimes) to figure out your train's number, letter, or destination. It took tens of millions of dollars to eradicate, money that could have been spent on maintenance and improvement. It gave the impression that our society was

*(continued on page 18)*



An illustration of a road with a loop, featuring a grey road with white dashed lines that forms a circular loop. A blue road with white dashed lines enters from the top right and exits from the top left. The background is orange with dark brown geometric shapes.

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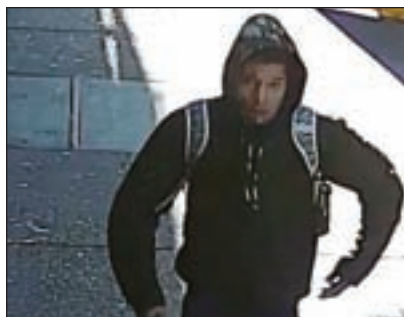
## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY &amp; DAVID GREENE



Precinct		2023		2022		2021		2020		2019	
		2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Manhattan	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Queens	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Brooklyn	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Richmond	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Westchester	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Albany	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Orange	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Ulster	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Delaware	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Putnam	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Rockland	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Passaic	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Essex	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Franklin	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Windsor	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Montgomery	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Alameda	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Contra Costa	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
San Francisco	10.1%	10	1	10.1%	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

An overview chart of the main NYPD crime statistics in the 52nd Precinct both for the latest 28-day period and year-to-date as of Dec. 3 is included below.



### Fordham: Man Sought following Armed Assault

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is sought in connection with an assault that occurred on the border of Fordham Manor and Fordham Heights.

Police said that on Saturday, Nov. 11, at around 12.50 p.m., a 37-year-old male victim was walking in the vicinity of East Fordham Road and Walton Avenue when he was approached by an unidentified man. "The individual [suspect] then struck the victim's face with a firearm and fled the location on foot to parts unknown," police said.

The victim sustained minor injuries and refused medical attention, they added. Police said the suspect is described as male, has a medium complexion, a medium build, and is approximately 5 feet, 7 inches tall. They said he was last seen wearing a black jacket, blue jeans, white shoes, and a multicolored backpack.

### Fordham Heights: Three Women Sought in Armed Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the people seen in the accompanying photo who they say are sought in connection with a robbery pattern identified across Fordham Heights and Manhattan.

The first incident occurred in Midtown Manhattan South. Police said that on Monday, Nov. 20, at around 1.10 a.m., the victim, a 60-year-old male cab driver got into a dispute with three passengers

in his vehicle in the vicinity of 412 Lexington Avenue.

"Acting in concert, the passengers displayed a firearm and forcibly removed the victim's cell phone," police said. "The passengers fled into the Grand Central - 42 Street subway station." Police said the victim was uninjured following the incident.

The second incident was reported in The Bronx. Police said that on Monday, Nov. 20, at around 3.07 a.m., the victim, a 59-year-old male cab driver dropped off three passengers at the intersection of Ryer Avenue and East 180th Street.

"Acting in concert, the passengers displayed a firearm and demanded the victim's property," police said. They said the passengers stole the victim's wallet containing \$210 and a cell phone and then fled on foot. Police said the victim was uninjured following the incident.

They said the first person is described as female, is around 5 feet, 7 inches tall, has a light complexion and a slim build. They said she was last seen wearing a black jacket, a green top, green tights, and black and white sneakers.

Police said the second person is also described as female, is around 5 feet, 5 inches tall, has a light complexion, a heavy build, and black and red braids. They said she was last seen wearing a black jacket, black pants, and brown fur slippers.

Police said the third person is also described as female, is around 5 feet, 7 inches tall, has a dark complexion, and a heavy build. They said she was last seen wearing a black hooded jacket and black pants.

### Woman Charged with Alleged Assault of Toddler

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, Nov. 27, that a Bronx woman was charged with assault and reckless endangerment for allegedly deliberately giving her 3-year-old daughter anti-seizure medication the child did not require.

According to the investigation, on or about, and between May 2, 2023, and May 3, 2023, Brown brought her then-3-year-old daughter to the Emergency Department at Montefiore Children's Hospital in Norwood and reported to medical staff that the child had not received her morning dose of anti-seizure medication prescribed to treat epilepsy.

The child was admitted to the hospital and the level of anti-seizure medication in the child's blood was found to be toxic. While in the pediatric intensive care unit at Montefiore Children's Hospital, and after being informed that her daughter was toxic, Brown allegedly gave the child additional anti-seizure medication which created the risk of exposing her daughter to serious medical complications.

According to the investigation, between her daughter's date of birth on May 22, 2019, and May 8, 2023, Brown allegedly endangered the child's welfare

by bringing her to 15 different medical providers on at least 190 separate occasions. She also allegedly falsified her daughter's medical history and diagnosis and made factitious representations about the child's physical and psychological signs and symptoms to staff at the various medical providers.

Clark said Tajanae Brown, 24, of East 163rd Street, The Bronx was arraigned on Monday before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Kim Parker on charges of attempted assault in the first degree, second-degree assault, first degree reckless endangerment, attempted assault in the second degree, and endangering the welfare of a child. The defendant is due back in court on Feb. 7, 2024. Electronic monitoring with supervised release conditions was continued, according to the prosecution. The defendant is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.



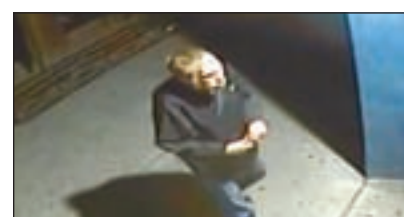
### Bedford Park: Man Robbed at Gunpoint

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo who they say is sought in connection to an armed robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Wednesday, Nov. 15, at around 3.17 a.m., the person entered 2801 Jerome Avenue and engaged in conversation with the victim, a 44-year-old male employee.

"The individual produced a firearm and forcibly removed \$55 from the victim," a police spokesperson said. "The individual then struck the victim with his helmet multiple times in the face and body." Police said the gunman was last seen fleeing southbound on Jerome Avenue.

They said the victim suffered minor injuries and was treated at the scene by EMS. Police said the assailant is described as male, is around 5 feet, 8 inches tall, has a medium complexion and a medium build. They said he was last seen wearing a black helmet, a black, hooded sweatshirt, black pants, and black sneakers.

According to Google Maps, the address of the robbery location appears to indicate a location on the subway train tracks located adjacent to Jerome Avenue, south of Bedford Park Boulevard, and according to City records, it is owned by The City of New York.



### Man Sought for Antisemitic Harassment

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo, who they say is sought in connection with an aggravated harassment incident that occurred in University Heights. Police said that on Thursday, Oct. 26, at around 5.05 a.m., the unidentified man approached the door of 2105 Jerome Avenue and drew a swastika and multiple Ks on the door.

"The individual then fled the location on foot, traveling to parts unknown," police said. "There were no injuries reported." Police said the person sought is described as male, has a light complexion and gray hair, and is around 50 to 60 years old. They added the incident is being investigated by the NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force.

As reported, another antisemitic incident, and a separate incident involving graffiti on a Jewish synagogue were reported in Norwood in since Hamas attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7. New York City Mayor Eric Adams recently held a roundtable with faith and community leaders to address the uptick in hate crimes across the city.

"This is a very painful moment we are all going through, and I don't have all the answers, which is why hearing from our faith leaders is so crucial," Adams said. "I'm hoping this circle of dialogue and mutual respect continues to grow as we navigate all that is happening across our planet."

Overall, year-to-date hate crimes are down citywide by 6 percent (568 v 603), police said, but tensions have risen across New York City and elsewhere since Oct 7. For the month of November, compared to November 2022, the NYPD reported an increase of 24 hate crime cases, or 33% (96 v 72).

In The Bronx, specifically, year-to-date hate crimes as of Dec. 3 were down by 35.7% compared to the same date last year. In the 52nd Precinct, which covers some or all of the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood, Bronx Park, and University Heights, year-to-date hate crime incidents as of Dec. 3 were up by 25%, compared to the same date in 2022.

*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.*



# Unity Democrats Hold Annual Elections

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The Unity Democratic Club which, as reported, launched last year on Oct. 3, held their first annual elections during a meeting on Thursday, Nov. 16, at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, located on Dekalb Avenue in Norwood.

Club member, Aryeh Kalb, oversaw the club elections of the executive committee roles in the presence of about 20 to 30 members, noting after the elections that all positions were uncontested. Betsey Knapp was reelected as president. During the nomination process, the club's vice president, Danielle Guggenheim, nominated Knapp, highlighting what she said was Knapp's commitment to ensuring democracy lasts, because, according to Guggenheim, it was under attack.

"She's not getting paid for this and it's her baby," Guggenheim said. "The fact that she understands that different neighborhoods need to be represented in this club really speaks to her commitment to The Bronx, and as I walk more and more in my neighborhood, I realize that people have lost hope and they do not feel that government is [inaudible] to serve them, but she's fighting that."

Knapp thanked Guggenheim for the nomination, and said, in part, "I've served in this role for a year, and I've been active in the community for years so basically, this whole year has been about building the club, building infrastructure so that we get more people and good people from our club endorsed and elected." She added, "So, I would be happy to [inaudible] the role, if so elected."

Guggenheim was reelected as vice president, with Knapp

nominating her and describing her as inspirational. "She's become a true leader of our club and I feel as though she will continue in that role and truly help us with moving democracy forward," Knapp said. The club president also mentioned Guggenheim's efforts in getting out the vote and supporting the club's candidates.

For her part, Guggenheim said, "Thank you for nominating me. It is something that I feel strongly about, and I accept. Thank you." Kalb then informed attendees that Scott Wasserman had emailed him ahead of the meeting, indicating his wish to nominate himself as treasurer, and explaining that he could not be present at the meeting. There were no other nominations for treasurer and Wasserman was duly elected.

Madeline Ritter was reelected as secretary. "Paratek," who nominated Ritter, said she had already done the job and done it well. "I don't see why we shouldn't have her again," he said.

Don Bluestone was elected as chair of programming, nominated by Ritter, who said, in part, he had been a member of the programming committee for the last year and added some other remarks about growing membership.

Bluestone thanked his colleague for the nomination, which he clarified was for programming and education, and added, in part, "I think the education in our committee and society is very important. I enjoy working on the committee now. I think it's a great group of people and there is a lot of work to be done and I hope to continue with it."

Daniel Ranells was elected as chair of organizing by Abi-



Photo by Síle Moloney

**REELECTED PRESIDENT OF** the Unity Democratic Club Betsy Knapp addresses members at a club meeting on Nov. 16, 2023, held at Montefiore Mosholu Community Center in Norwood, The Bronx.

gail Martin, female district leader for Assembly District 81, which covers much of the northwest Bronx. Martin said, in part, of Ranells, "For three years, I've known him in various different campaigns and capacities. I know that his heart is in this community. I know he loves campaigning. I think he'll bring energy and expertise to this role."

Accepting the nomination, Ranells said, in part, "I know a lot of folks in here and believe in their belief in democracy and I think the way to increase democracy is to increase the belief in it, and I think you all are doing a great job, and I'd love to work with you on that, canvassing, as well as the usual, political piece."

David Knapp was elected as chair of membership, nominated by Ranells, who said, "David has been an active member of the community for a long time and knows how to get people involved, and he knows lots of jokes!"

Accepting the nomination, Knapp spoke about the role of membership, saying, "I was the lead organizer for many years for Northwest Bronx Indivisible." He said one of his hallmarks was that he would have coffee with anybody in the neighborhood. "I don't care what your politics are," he said.

"What I care about is what you're passionate about, and activating people that may be on the fence, or may feel alienated. I think I'm pretty good at it. Some of you might not know me from these days, but like we did have quite a diversity of people from different, political, and ideological backgrounds. Yes, I like to tell jokes. Hopefully, everyone loves my jokes!"

Marcelo Lopez was elected as chair of communications, with Betsy Knapp nominating him. "So, the job is big, and we need someone with experience of collaborating with others, and building a community of individuals with a lot of purpose, and so the one person who really exhibits that is Marcelo Lopez, and I strongly believe that he would be a wonderful candidate for this role," she said.

Accepting the nomination, Lopez said in part, "I think that it's about supporting other people." He talked about working in a nursing home and being in an environment where it was about fixing things, supporting people, and making things better. He added, in part, that, in his opinion, the community was receptive and willing to listen [to new ideas] and said it was time "to pull a lot of levers" and "put a lot more pressure" into the club's outreach efforts [to harness political power].

Neither Ramdat Singh, male district leader for Assembly District 81, nor fellow club member, Morgan Evers, State committee member of the Bronx Democratic Party, were present at the meeting but through a fellow member, "Aaron," Evers encouraged members to sign up to potentially attend the Democratic National Convention in Chicago next year from Aug. 19 through Aug. 22.

Later in the meeting, Matt Nisenoff, director of party building, and Paige Havener, VP of political affairs at the New Kings Democratic Club (NKD) in Brooklyn shared their insights on local organizing in Brooklyn. Introducing the speakers, Knapp said, "Our club's founding was actually

inspired by this club."

According to NKD's website, it is "a progressive, grassroots political organization committed to bringing transparency, accountability, and inclusionary democracy to the Kings County Democratic Party," and was founded by veterans of the Obama campaign.

The two talked about the county committee set-up in Brooklyn, comprising 4500 members, as well as the Brooklyn-based organization, "Rep Your Block." Referring to the latter, Nisenoff said, "[It] was formed three or four cycles ago. The idea of it is we want everyday people to be in those county committee seats, and the more we can get in, the better."

Nisenoff explained that, unlike NKD, Rep Your Block was not focused on policy, but solely on helping people with paperwork and ballots and getting people onto the county committee. He said "Rep My Block" was a separate organization.

Havener explained that their understanding was that the female district leader position within the Democratic Party had been introduced decades ago to encourage more participation by women in politics. They then talked about how NKB sued the Brooklyn Democratic Party to encourage more participation by people of all genders.

Havener said they and other candidates took a case against the Party whereby they refused to declare a gender for the district leader roles and won. "The rule now is that you have to have two people of different genders, but those two different genders could be male and female; male, non-binary; or female, non-binary," they said.

Havener added in part, "My ideal would be no gender declaration required because it's like, what does it matter?" They said their rationale was that if there are only two people of the same gender interested in running e.g. two men, they now can't do so.

Among other topics, Havener and Nisenoff also talked about how organized the Brooklyn Democratic Party leadership was, giving the example of the use of proxies ahead of party meetings to guarantee voting outcomes.

Later, Norwood News asked  
(continued on page 14)



Photo by Síle Moloney

**MEMBERS OF THE** Unity Democratic Club applaud as new committee members are elected during a club meeting on Nov. 16, 2023, held at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in Norwood, The Bronx.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Be Coyote Aware

NYC Parks is advising residents to be coyote aware, in light of recent sightings in the City. They advise that if residents see a coyote, do not panic. Most are not dangerous. However, they should be observed from a distance. Do not feed them and dispose of food properly to avoid attracting them, protect your pets, and keep coyotes wary by making yourself appear big, wave your arms, and make loud noises until the coyote retreats. In case of an emergency such as physical contact or a bite from a coyote, dial 911.

## Missing Cat

The pictured cat is missing from the Norwood section of The Bronx. A poster affixed to a pole on Putnam Place between East Gun Hill Road and Reservoir Oval East asks anyone who sees the cat to call (774) 281 9654. The cat is white and brown, has blue eyes, and is male. He was lost on East 206th Street, Bronx, NY 10467. He wears a blue collar, and his family misses him.

## Research on Human Trafficking

The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence is partnering with The Passage, a UK-based homelessness organization, to better understand the experiences of trafficking survivors. They are asking survivors to help their understanding of the link between human trafficking and homelessness in NYC by completing a research survey and optional invite to join a one-hour, in-person focus group from Jan. 22 to Jan. 24, 2024. Online interviews may also be possible outside of these dates. Visit <https://on.nyc.gov/36K6nhd> to access the survey and learn more.

vors to help their understanding of the link between human trafficking and homelessness in NYC by completing a research survey and optional invite to join a one-hour, in-person focus group from Jan. 22 to Jan. 24, 2024. Online interviews may also be possible outside of these dates. Visit <https://on.nyc.gov/36K6nhd> to access the survey and learn more.

## Toy Drive for Asylum Families

Neighborhood Association for Inter-Cultural Affairs (NAICA), City Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and United Healthcare Community Plan are inviting Bronx residents to donate toys to asylum families at designated drop off locations in The Bronx at NAICA, 12 E Clark Place, Bronx or 277 West 231<sup>st</sup> Street, Bronx, or via a virtual Amazon wish list. Visit [www.naicany.org](http://www.naicany.org) for more information.

## Memorial Mass

A memorial mass to celebrate and honor the life of Lucy Jacovic, a special woman who was a fixture in the Bronx Little Italy community, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9, at 10:45 a.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel church in Belmont. Lucy could be seen every single day at her hair styling shop on Arthur Avenue which she owned and where she took care of so many clients going

back over 30 years. All are invited by the Jacovic family to attend.

## Public Meeting of Cannabis Control Board

NYS Cannabis Control Board will hold a public meeting on Friday, Dec. 8, at 11 a.m. Public comment will be allowed during a designated part of the meeting. Online submissions will be part of the official record of the meeting and will be documented in the meeting minutes. All online comments must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 12. To pre-register for the meeting, visit

[https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=6rhs9AB5EE2M64Dowcge5\\_G80bH7utFMhasW98c0bjlUNUt-GOUJVVf00MTkxWE9KUldOS-FA4R1A3NS4u](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=6rhs9AB5EE2M64Dowcge5_G80bH7utFMhasW98c0bjlUNUt-GOUJVVf00MTkxWE9KUldOS-FA4R1A3NS4u). The streaming link to view the meeting live will be provided ahead of the meeting. Videos, transcripts, and minutes of the meeting will be posted on the board's website following the meeting. Additional information can be found here: <https://cannabis.ny.gov/>.

## CB7 & 52 Pct Toy Drive for Local Children

Bronx Community Board 7 and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct is collecting unwrapped, new toys for a holiday toy drive for children in the district. The drop off location is 3016 Webster Avenue, Bronx (52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct stationhouse). For more information, call (718) 220 5824.

## Open Call for Curators

Bronx Arts Space (BAS) advises of the 2024 Emerging Bronx Voices Open Call for curators. BAS is looking for more up and coming curators to apply to an open call. They welcome anyone (no exhibit curation experience needed) who lives or works in The Bronx to submit an idea for a thematic exhibition at BAS. Email applications to [sabine@bronxartspace.com](mailto:sabine@bronxartspace.com) by midnight, Feb. 11, 2024. Selected exhibitions will be on view at BAS from April 11 - May 18, 2024.

## Annual Holiday Canned Food Drive

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) is calling on residents to donate through Friday, Dec. 8, canned fruits and vegetables, cereals, dried beans, pasta, rice, tuna, coffee, teas, canned juices, powdered milk, jell-o, and soups for an annual holiday food drive, with proceeds going to Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and St. Frances of Rome Food Pantry. Drop off at the assemblyman's office at 3107 Kingsbridge Avenue, off West 231<sup>st</sup> Street near Broadway. Call (718) 796 5345 for more details.

**Applications Open for En Foco Media Arts Fund 2024: Works-in-Progress Initiative Support Grant**

Applications for the En Foco Media Arts Fund 2024: Works-In-Progress Initiative opened on Nov. 15 and close on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024, at 11.59 p.m. The fourth Annual En Foco Media Arts Fund: Work in Progress (WIP) Initiative Support Grant, in collaboration with BronxNet, is designed to support New York City-based, early career artists of color who engage with digital media technologies within their art-making processes. For this opportunity, early-career artists are defined by a 2 to 9-year artistic working history. Artists who have also applied for the 2024 Photography Fellowship are only eligible to receive one award if selected for either opportunity. Contact [grants@enfoco.org](mailto:grants@enfoco.org) 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](http://on.nyc.gov/3MQndmG). Commissary Reports are also available at [on.nyc.gov/3R3blup](http://on.nyc.gov/3R3blup).

## 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).

## 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.gov/kingsbridge-armory-redevelopment-rfp>.

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) launched an affordable housing lottery for units at 2330 Cambreleng Avenue in Belmont, with a deadline of Dec. 20. Visit [www.norwoodnews.org](http://www.norwoodnews.org) and search for "affordable housing" for more information

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# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

**The Nutcracker**, presented by Westchester Ballet Company, is coming to the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468, on Thursday, Dec. 14 at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. and Friday, Dec. 15, at 10:30 a.m. Learn more at [WestchesterBallet.org](http://WestchesterBallet.org).

## MUSIC

**A Holiday Concert** with Bronx Arts Ensemble will be held in the Woolworth Chapel (Jerome Avenue Entrance) of Woodlawn Conservatory, 4199 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY 10470, on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, at 7 p.m. Join this free event for an evening of musical holiday favorites. 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 Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, will be hosting a **Winter Wonderland** event on Friday, Dec. 8, from 4.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Families and children are invited to join for some winter fun, including arts & crafts, winter games and a special visit from Santa.

## 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.

The Van Cortlandt Jewish Center invites the community to join in the festive spirit of **Chanukah** at its upcoming celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. The event, hosted at 3880 Sedgwick Ave, Bronx, NY 10463, promises an evening of joy, tradition, and community camaraderie. Attendees will have the opportunity to bask in the warm glow of the 6th Chanukah candle, symbolizing unity and the triumph of light over darkness.

The celebration will feature delightful culinary offerings, including mouthwatering Latkes (potato pancakes) and sweet Jelly Donuts, adding a culinary touch to the festivities. Musical entertainment for the evening will be provided by the talented Chaim Zadok.

## MOVEMENT

**Gentle Yoga Flow** classes with Shape Up NYC and NYC Parks have begun at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood since Nov. 9, and continue each Thursday at 6.30

p.m. 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. 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>.

# Gillibrand Releases New Report on Anti-Gun Trafficking Law

By SÍLE MOLONEY

U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand unveiled her report analyzing initial successes arising from the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act* (BSCA)'s anti-gun trafficking section and mental health funding distribution on Tuesday, Dec. 5. Gillibrand's first-of-its-kind report found that more than 1,300 illegal guns have been seized and more than 200 defendants have been charged under BSCA's new gun trafficking statute.

"After more than a decade of sustained advocacy, the centerpiece of my anti-gun trafficking bill was included in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and this original report shows that the law is already taking guns off the streets and putting criminals behind bars," said Gillibrand.

She continued, "After less than a year and half with the new anti-gun trafficking statute, more than 1,300 illegal guns have been seized and more than 200 defendants have been charged. Additionally, more than \$750 million has been distributed to support mental health services, which will also support the hiring of over 14,000 new mental health professionals in schools. Making gun trafficking a federal crime was long overdue— BSCA is proof that Democrats are working hard to keep our communities safe, and that when Congress works together, we can



Photo courtesy of U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand

**U.S. SEN. KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND** unveiled her report analyzing initial successes arising from the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act* (BSCA)'s anti-gun trafficking section and mental health funding distribution on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023 outside the NYPD's headquarters at One Police Plaza in Manhattan.

make a difference on gun violence."

The senator said the analysis shows that at least 190 of the seized guns were AR-15s or AR-style weapons and authorities also seized at least 151 ghost guns. The data also revealed that over \$750 million has been distributed to finance mental and behavioral health services nationwide, which will also support the hiring of over 14,000 new mental health professionals in schools.

Gillibrand's *Hadiya Pendleton and Nyasia Pryear-Yard Gun Trafficking and Crime Prevention Act* formed the centerpiece of BSCA's anti-gun trafficking provision. Gillibrand first introduced the bill in 2009 after meeting with the family of Nyasia Pryear-Yard, who tragically lost her life at 17 when she was shot by a perpetrator using an illegally trafficked gun.

As previously reported, on July 20, Congressman Ritchie Torres

(NY-15) commemorated National Gun Violence Awareness Month by joining the family of the late Angellyh Yambo, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, and students from University Prep Charter High School to announce new federal legislation named in Angellyh's memory, banning ghost guns, and expanding the perimeter of gun-free school zones.



# OCM Steps Up Pressure on Unlicensed Cannabis Shops

By SÍLE MOLONEY, MIA HOLLIE & GREGORY PERRY

The New York State Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) published a second update on Monday, Dec. 4, on enforcement actions taken against unlicensed cannabis shops across the State.

In November, OCM officials said its investigators and NYS Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) inspected 71 shops, including 13 re-inspections, suspected of selling unlicensed cannabis. They said these resulted in the seizure of 812 pounds of flower, 701 pounds of edibles, and 61 pounds of concentrate, with an estimated value of \$7,284,986.

Chris Alexander, executive director of OCM, said, in part, "As we look ahead to this next chapter in New York's cannabis market, we continue to prioritize safety across the state by working diligently to shut down illegal operators."

OCM officials said their actions bring the total number of inspections to 350 locations, 88 of which they said have been re-inspected, to yield over 11,000 pounds of seized, illicit cannabis worth more than \$54 million. They said OCM and DTF investigators will continue inspections every week across the State.

Officials also said that on Nov. 21, OCM, along with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), won its first petition for emergency relief under Section 16-a of the Cannabis Law, a new section of the law that went into effect this year. They said this established an important precedent allowing the State to seek longer term closures for businesses found to be illegally selling cannabis.

They also said that OCM and OAG will host a public webinar for municipalities across the state on Thursday, Dec. 7, to provide education and resources around best practices and opportunities to shut down illicit cannabis operators.

Alexander said, "The number one remedy for the problem of these illicit shops is getting more *legal* businesses open." He continued, "New Yorkers want to know where their products are coming from, and they know they can rely on safe, trusted, and locally grown cannabis when they walk into one of our legal dispensaries."

According to the website, American Addiction Centers (AAC), cannabis can be laced with other psychoactive drugs to produce varied psychoactive effects. Some of these other drugs may include lead or other heavy metals, glass, fungus and bacteria, PCP, heroin, embalming fluid, laundry detergent, LSD, methamphetamine, ketamine, and cocaine.

According to AAC, although cannabis is less likely to be intentionally laced with other psychoactive substances than many other illicit drugs, it does occur, and is more likely to occur in cases where individuals who are selling a drug illicitly attempt to bulk up the product and get more profits, or when very low-quality cannabis is laced with some other drug to enhance its psycho-

active effects.

Additionally, according to the City's Administration for Children's Services, the availability of tempting treats such as gummy candies, lollipops, cookies, brownies, and sweetened beverages, like sodas and lemonade, that contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, are on the rise as are pediatric cannabis poisonings.

"Cannabis edible products are often made to closely resemble popular brand name candy and snacks with nearly identical packaging with the name slightly changed," an extract from the website reads. "Despite their ordinary appearance, just one cannabis-infused candy or cookie can contain several times the recommended adult dose of THC."

Health officials say when these are eaten by children, they result in overdose effects such as intoxication, excessive sleepiness, stupor, mild tremors, uncoordinated movements, seizures and, in rare cases, coma."

It continues, "In 2020, the American Association of Poison Control Centers reported more than 3,000 exposures to edible cannabis products involving children in the U.S. Most of the exposures were in children aged 5 or younger."

Meanwhile, OCM officials said fines for the illegal sale of cannabis start at \$10,000 per day and can increase to \$20,000 per day for the most egregious conduct. They said the inspected businesses may also be subject to additional violations and penalties under tax law.

They said additional fines may be assessed and the enforcement legislation passed in May 2023 also authorizes OCM to seek a State court order to ultimately padlock businesses found to be in repeated violation of the law. In addition, they said the law makes it a crime to sell cannabis and cannabis products without a license.

Additionally, they said Gov. Kathy Hochul announced partnerships between OCM and the OAG through which municipalities across the state can receive training on how to utilize a particular provision of the new enforcement law, Section 16-A, signed by Hochul in May 2023, to pursue padlocking orders in State Court.

They said 16-A authorizes local governments, including county attorneys, with OCM's approval, to pursue padlocking orders from a court against any unlicensed cannabis business found to be engaged in egregious conduct. They said this authority significantly augments the ability of different levels of government to work together to shut down illegal cannabis operators.

In addition, they said the governor announced that more State agencies will now be bringing the weight of their business enforcement powers to bear as part of what was described as the State's creative and aggressive approach to combating the illicit cannabis market.



Image courtesy of the Office of Cannabis Management

**EXAMPLE OF OCM'S** Dispensary Verification Tool sticker which must be displayed on licensed cannabis stores.

They said NYS Department of Labor and the Workers Compensation Board are joining these efforts to ensure businesses selling cannabis without a license are compliant with New York State labor and workers compensation laws.

They said this approach, which combines the enforcement powers of labor law, tax law, and cannabis law, can result in non-compliant business owners potentially facing tens of thousands of dollars in penalties as a result of a single inspection, significantly enhancing the State's ability to crack down on those who engage in illicit sales.

In late October and early November, *Norwood News* walked around Bronx Community District 7 (CD7), which covers the neighborhoods of Norwood, Bedford Park, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights, and counted around 26 smoke shops operating in the district.

During the October Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) health committee

meeting, Michelle Avila, the committee chair, explained, "People or businesses who applied for retail [cannabis] dispensary or onsite consumption license need to submit a notification that their proposed location is within the boundary of the municipalities, prior to filing their application [to the Cannabis Control Board]."

She added, "The community board opinion will become *part* of the record [on the basis of] which the Cannabis Control Board shall grant or deny an application for a cannabis license."

As reported, four new license applicants who were due to present to Bronx Community Board 7 later rescinded their notifications sent to the board ahead of a Nov. 14 scheduled public hearing, which was later cancelled as a result.

Meanwhile, OCM officials said *New York State* currently has 27 licensed, adult-use cannabis dispensaries. These include two in the Bronx, Half Island Flavors LLC, and Royal Leaf NY LLC, the latter with an address at 817 E Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10460.

According to OCM, Half Island Flavor LLC is a temporary, "delivery only" location, and no in-person or pre-order sales are allowed on site. Its website is <https://myseshnyc.com/>, while Royal Leaf's website is <https://statisccannabis.com/>.

OCM officials said the agency has also approved 44 cannabis grower showcases. None are in The Bronx. They said all regulated, licensed dispensaries must post the Dispensary Verification Tool sticker (image attached) near their main entrance of their store, and any store selling cannabis that does not display this sticker is operating without a license.

In reference to monitoring the safety of products being sold, Alexander concluded, "We will continue to seize illegal products, and we know that the collaborative work continues across all levels of government to address this public health crisis."

## Unity Democrats Hold Annual Elections

(continued from page 11)

if anyone had had difficulties voting in the last general election since at least two Bedford Park residents had said they had not received information that their usual voting centers had changed ahead of the last Elec-

tion Day. Guggenheim said she was aware of one person.

Norwood News followed up with the Board of Elections on the matter. Deputy executive director, Vincent Ignizio, replied, saying, "All voters were sent an information notice and a fastpass card (with early voting and election day voting locations on them) citywide."

He added, "The BOE has an online version to check one's site, and call center for those who prefer that option: 1-866-Vote-NYC. Poll sites are not changed without informing the voters."

Unity Democratic Club members were reminded to check their spam in case they weren't getting the club's emails, and the outgoing executive committee were thanked for their service. The club will host its Christmas party on Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at The Bronx Public, 170 West 231st Street in Kingsbridge Heights.



Photo by Síle Moloney

**REELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF** the Unity Democratic Club Daniele Guggenheim is applauded by members at a club meeting on Nov. 16, 2023, held at Montefiore Moshulu Community Center in Norwood, The Bronx.





## Take Control of your Life in 2024 to Help Reduce Cancer Risk

By **ALYSON MOADEL-ROBBLEE, BALAZS HALMOS & ADEBOLA A. ADEDIMEJI**

According to the American Cancer Society, rates of cancer death are higher among racial and ethnic minorities. At Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC), our experts are committed to finding the reasons for these disparities, reducing cancer incidence, and addressing these inequities.

Recently, we held an MECCC Genentech AIR Cancer Health Equity Symposium, attended by around 125 members of the community, cancer doctors, and other specialists from around the country, to highlight the importance of diversity in cancer clinical trial research and encour-

age conversations about cancer prevention, screening, treatment, research, and programming that supports quality of life for people with cancer in The Bronx.

Genentech AIR (advancing inclusive research) works closely with a select five cancer centers around the country, of which MECCC is one, to reduce barriers to cancer research access and participation. Excitingly, they also chose to hold this important, annual, cancer health equity symposium in only one site, and that was right here in The Bronx at MECCC.

We heard directly from community members about their experiences with cancer and discussed the various factors in a person's life that affect their chances of getting cancer. We heard from cancer researchers and medical providers on the important resources available to achieve optimal health, including genetic counseling, clinical trials, and psychosocial support.

We also heard from Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson about the importance of promoting health equity through addressing social determinants of health in the neighborhoods we live and work in, through access to healthy food, and safe places to exercise, and secure housing.

We also shared how we provide leading cancer therapies and clinical trials, which are accessible and serve our di-

verse community, representing 200 languages. Together, we are learning about how to advance overall health in our community and tackle barriers to early access to state-of-the-art cancer care, including stigma, fear, and lack of access to the most up-to-date information, treatments, and research.

As a new year quickly approaches, we want our community to be mindful of important steps for us to take control of our health and help reduce cancer risk. At MECCC, we have many resources to ensure our community is armed with the best defenses against cancer, including, risk assessment to understand your risk for cancer, navigation to cancer screening, clinical Trials Office with over 320 clinical trials, and state-of-the-art genetic testing.

They also include the BOLD Cancer Wellness Program for psychosocial support and BOLD Buddy peer navigation, cancer education & training for Bronx youth, diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that promote diversity in the workforce at MECCC, and community outreach, education and screening events upon request.

As we look towards 2024, we look forward to hosting screening events to help catch cancer at earlier stages when it's easiest to treat or cure, providing the highest quality care and access to clini-

cal trials for new cancer treatment and connecting our Bronx community at risk of, or living with, cancer with our BOLD peer support and wellness programs. We want to assure you that we are here to support the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of people in our community affected by cancer.

To learn more visit <https://cancer.montefioreeinstein.org/>.

**Alyson Moadel-Robblee Ph.D. is director of the BOLD Cancer Wellness Program, and deputy director of community engagement and cancer health equity at Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center.**

**Balazs Halmos M.D. is a professor at the Department of Oncology (medical oncology) and the Department of Medicine (oncology & hematology), and is associate director for clinical science at Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center.**

**Adebola A. Adedimeji Ph.D. is professor and division head at the Department of Epidemiology & Population Health (health behavior research & implementation science), and associate director for diversity, equity & inclusion at Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center.**

## Local Artist Barbara Korman Fondly Remembered

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Local Bedford Park artist Barbara Korman has been remembered fondly by those who knew her following her recent death on Thursday, Nov. 30, at the age of 85. Bedford Moshulu Community Association president Barbara Stronczer, who said Korman was buried on Sunday, Dec. 3, said of her friend, "Barbara was a talented individual with many interests. She will be missed by both friends and neighbors."

A Bronx native, Korman was a former public-school arts teacher in Co-op City, and a former board president and former program director of the Katonah Museum Artists' Association. According to her website, Korman described her affinity and lifetime involvement with art, writing, "My Dad was a playful gambler, and my mom a fabulous baker... How could I not become an artist? Having fun taking chances and making things that are so much more than their ingredients."

Working in New York City and Westchester County, she maintained a studio for the design and production of three-dimensional constructions, unique cast bronzes and wood installations. According to her

website, Korman had traveled to every continent in the world, from the national parks in the United States to the Himalayas in Nepal, collecting regional art and making photographic notations of the land's textures and formations.

In her studio are photographs tacked to the walls, galvanizing those memories and relationships important to her current work. Her site describes her sculptures, free standing and wall hanging, created with a variety of materials, with layers of color added "to activate the surfaces and affect the visual movement of the forms."

In addition to local galleries like Bronx Art Space, Korman's award-winning works have been exhibited in more than one hundred solo and group shows in leading museums and galleries, including The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Neuberger Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Grounds for Sculpture, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, Katonah Museum of Art, Hudson River Museum and Tiffany and Company's Fifth Avenue windows.

Her sculptures are also included in public and private collections throughout the world, including the Neuberger Museum of Art, Phelps Memorial

Hospital, and Olivetti-Rome.

A graduate of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, the "Fame" school, Korman earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts at the New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University. According to her website, she dedicated a large part of her life to education and the development of creative thinking. Named "Style-Maker" by the New York Times, she is listed in the Foremost Women of the 20th Century and Who's Who in America.

*Norwood News* highlighted Korman's artwork over the years. On the website of Bronx Art Space, Korman previously wrote, "Changing times often signal changing behavior. After many years of working with salvaged tree branches, it felt like a time for a change." She added, "I do like the challenge of limitations, and decided to work with store-bought wood and papier mâché craft forms. These small sculptures, while serious, seemed playful and demanded bright, playful color. I think of them as fetishes for fun."

Lisa Keogh, Korman's Bedford Park, next door neighbor and friend, said of the late artist, "She was a born and bred Bronx woman. She taught art,



Photo courtesy of the artist

**BARBARA KORMAN WITH** one of her works of art in two undated photos.

an educator, an artist, a fabulous sculptor, and I describe her as a [raconteur] extraordinaire! She was one of the best storytellers I've ever met!"

Of the loss to the community, Keogh said, "A huge loss," add-

ing that she spoke last weekend with one of Korman's former students, Robert, with whom she had remained in contact over the years. Keogh added, "His last words to me [were], 'She was one cool teacher.'"





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## NYC Health + Hospitals Reminds New Yorkers of Guaranteed Healthcare Program: “NYC Care”

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

NYC Health + Hospitals has launched a public awareness campaign to encourage eligible New Yorkers to enroll in its existing, guaranteed healthcare program, NYC Care. They are doing so, officials said, to let New Yorkers know they can “access the primary, preventive, and specialty care needed to lead longer, healthier lives.”

According to NYC Health + Hospitals, the campaign consists of a combination of multilingual advertisements, media partnerships, marketing strategies and earned media opportunities, available in the languages most commonly spoken by NYC Care-eligible New Yorkers, which are English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese/Mandarin, and Bengali.

The campaign uses audio and video from the newly released ‘Doctor Public Service Announcement’ video series, along with static graphics featuring updated messages designed to build trust and highlight the ease with which New Yorkers can apply for the program. The placements include out-of-home, print and digital newspapers in community and ethnic media, television, radio, Google search/display and social media.

The placements will run through December, coinciding with efforts across the health system to ensure that New Yorkers are aware of the range of health care options available to them during the open enrollment period. City officials said the launch of the campaign continues the steady growth in membership since NYC Care exceeded its goal of reaching 100,000 members in February 2022. They said enrollment in NYC Care increased 5.4% from 113,178 members in Fiscal Year 2022 to 119,234 in Fiscal Year 2023, and is up 352% from its first year in 2019.

Jonathan Jiménez, MD, MPH, executive director of NYC Care from NYC Health + Hospitals said of the program, “Keeping New Yorkers healthy starts with keeping them informed, and I am thrilled to announce the launch of the city-wide public awareness campaign which sends the unified message across different forms of media that healthcare is a right, regardless of your immigration status, ability to pay, language, or how long you have lived in New York City. You can access world-class health care available through NYC Health + Hospitals.”

He added, “Since NYC Care launched in 2019, the NYC Care team has worked tirelessly to consistently put out messaging that encourages New Yorkers to seek the care that they are entitled to. Eligible New Yorkers can call 646-NYC-CARE (646-692-2273) to connect with the 24/7 NYC Care hotline, visit our NYC Care community-based organization partners across the city, or visit NYCCare.NYC to learn more about the program.”

Meanwhile, Manuel Castro, commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, said, “The launch of the

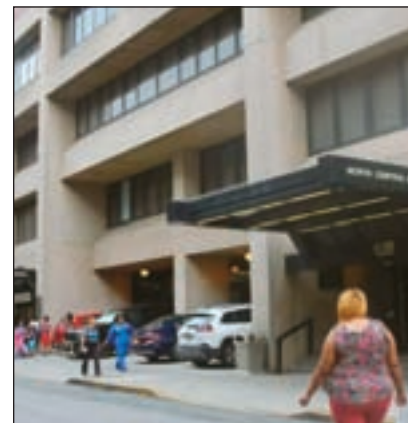


Photo by Síle Moloney

**NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS** North Central Bronx

NYC Care public awareness campaign will ensure New York City’s diverse immigrant communities are informed about the resources to live healthier lives.” He added, “The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs is proud to support these efforts, most recently by highlighting NYC Care in our immigrant media roundtable on digital equity for immigrant New Yorkers. I encourage eligible New Yorkers to reach out to NYC Care and learn more.”

In addition to launching paid ad placements, City officials said NYC Care will continue to leverage what they said were their strong partnerships with 22 community-based organizations to conduct culturally-sensitive outreach to prospective subscribers citywide. From community health fairs to back-to-school giveaways, to sharing flyers near areas of high foot traffic, they said their partners act as trusted community liaisons to answer NYC Care-eligible New Yorkers’ questions about the program, and also encourage residents to apply.

They said the NYC Care team meets with their partners regularly to share programmatic updates, and learn and understand how the program can do more to meet the needs of New Yorkers. They said NYC Care also works with partners at all levels of government, including the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, New York State of Health, and the mayor’s office, hosting webinars and in-person information sessions to share information about the program.

Last month, they said NYC Care executive director, Jonathan Jiménez, MD, MPH, joined a media roundtable hosted by the NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, LinkNYC, and the NYC Office of Technology & Innovation to announce the launch of NYC Care placements on LinkNYC kiosks, and other strategies to address digital inequity for immigrant New Yorkers.

According to City officials, last month, NYC Care announced a partnership with the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit to reach out to over 30,000 NYC Care members and encourage them to connect to primary care.



# Montefiore Einstein Awarded Grant for Experimental Cancer Treatment

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Two related blood cancers that disproportionately target older adults, acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), are notoriously difficult to treat and are associated with high relapse rates, according to medical experts at Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC). Although new therapies have improved survival rates, they say treatment options remain limited, and the prognosis for the 50% of people who have these cancers, remains poor.

Researchers at the National Cancer Institute-designated MECCC which, as reported, opened last September, were recently awarded a 4-year, \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to conduct what they describe as an innovative, phase 1 clinical trial of a new drug for patients with relapsed and treatment-resistant forms of AML and MDS. Medical experts at the center say the grant is one of only ten issued this year by the FDA through its Office of Orphan Products Development.

Aditi Shastri, M.D., the principal investigator who is utilizing the grant and who is a member of MECCC's stem cell and cancer biology research program and blood cancer institute, said, "This is a tremendous opportunity to apply the knowledge we have developed in our MECCC labs over the past decade to develop a novel therapeutic strategy." Shastri is also associate professor of oncology, medicine, and developmental and molecular biology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

According to MECCC medical experts, drugs that initially work against AML are ineffective when the disease returns. They say research suggests that such treatments leave behind leukemic stem cells that are resistant to existing medications and lead to relapsed and drug-resistant AML and MDS.

Shastri said the team at MECCC identified a molecular target in leukemic stem cells and a novel drug that performed well against those stem cells in pre-clinical studies. "We are eager to see if this drug and its combinations can

provide clinical benefit for our patients," she said.

According to MECCC medical experts, AML and MDS are rare diseases with among the worst prognoses of all cancers. They say most people who develop relapsed or treatment-resistant disease live for only another four to ten months. Since AML is so difficult to treat, they say most patients receive care at academic cancer centers. They add that MECCC, with its blood cancer institute and stem cell and cancer biology research program, is one of a few institutions in the country specializing in AML and MDS.

MECCC medical experts said that in 2018, Shastri and colleagues found that relapsed AML and MDS patients with the worst prognosis have leukemic stem cells that produce excessive levels of the protein STAT3. In subsequent studies, her lab found that STAT3 does several things to help MDS and AML cancer cells survive.

Most importantly, they found that STAT3 prevents cancer cells from undergoing apoptosis i.e. programmed cell death [of the cancerous cells]. They said the goal of a major AML/MDS drug called venetoclax is to kill the cancerous cells. Shastri hypothesized that blunting the impact of STAT3 could allow venetoclax to work more effectively and lead to better outcomes for patients.

Shastri and her team looked for drugs that specifically target and inhibit STAT3, and identified a novel drug called danvatirsen, developed by Flamingo Therapeutics and Ionis Pharmaceuticals, that is now being developed as a cancer treatment in early-phase clinical trials. After conducting preclinical tests, which indicated that danvatirsen showed promise against AML/MDS, Shastri is now set to investigate the drug in a phase 1 clinical trial.

The trial is slated to begin this month and will enroll patients with therapy-resistant MDS and AML at MECCC and MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, MECCC experts said. "Since this is a phase 1 trial, our first priority is to determine the safety of danvatirsen when used alone and in combination

with venetoclax, as well as the optimal dosages for the two drugs," Shastri said. "We will investigate the effect of danvatirsen, alone and in combination with venetoclax, on leukemic stem cells."

MECCC medical experts said that if the researchers find evidence that the experimental treatment produces initial successful results, they will expand the study to a phase 2 trial to further assess the treatment's effectiveness. They said the co-principal investigator of the clinical trial is Naval Daver, M.D., at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. MECCC experts said the MECCC co-investigators utilizing the awarded research grant are Marina Konopleva, M.D., and Ulrich Steidl, M.D., Ph.D.

The grant is titled, "A phase 1 study investigating the safety & efficacy of danvatirsen as monotherapy, followed by combination with venetoclax in patients with relapsed/refractory MDS &

AML (R01FD007836)."

To mark the launch of Lung Cancer Awareness Month, which began on Nov. 1, Montefiore Einstein Comprehensive Cancer Center (MECCC) hosted an event at its Moses campus in Norwood, along with a pair of giant, inflatable lungs in efforts to help educate the community about the importance of life-saving cancer screening.

Meanwhile, in October, the Children's Hospital at Montefiore held a Halloween event, as reported, for children with diabetes, who were allowed exchange the regular candy they obtained while trick or treating with less sugary treats.

Also in October, past patient graduates of Montefiore's Jack D. Weiler Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) gathered for a "Spooktakular Costume Party" on Monday, Oct. 30, for the first time since the pandemic.

## Annual Veterans Day Commemoration Held at Bronx Victory Memorial



Photo courtesy of AJ Ramos

**LOCAL VETERAN ANTHONY** Rivieccio chats with residents gathered at the Bronx Victory Memorial on Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Commemoration on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023.

(continued from page 2)

rade. Many object to U.S. support of Israel in its latest military conflict with Hamas, further to the latter's attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7, and the taking of hundreds of Israeli hostages, including some infants.

Some hostages have since been released and exchanged for Palestinians previously detained in Israeli prisons. The high number of Palestinian civilian deaths, estimated at over 15,000 since Oct. 7, including many children, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza strip over several decades, has formed the basis of public opposition to the war. Israel says Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis in the attacks.

The Manhattan parade included veterans who are also members of SAGE-Vets, a statewide program which assists older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-

gender (LGBTQ+) veterans of the U.S. military over the age of 50. They help improve access to veteran benefits and their overall health and wellness. Local Norwood resident AJ Ramos has long advocated for LGBTQ+ veterans to be honored in CD7 and the board is currently assessing how best this can be achieved.

Meanwhile, Arias said during a recent CB7 public safety forum held at a Kingsbridge Heights public school that 2025 will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of the Bronx Victory Memorial and the board hopes that annual commemoration will be even bigger and better.

On the background to his military career, Rivieccio said he enlisted in 1977 at the U.S. Navy office on Fordham Road. "As a Bronxite, I feel honored to serve both my country and community, and while recognition is wonderful, honoring the history is even better."



Photo by David Greene

**MONTEFIORE EINSTEIN COMPREHENSIVE** Cancer Center (MECCC) opened at the Hutchinson Metro Center on Wednesday, September 27, 2023.





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## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place at Tracy Towers Community Room A, 20 W Mosholu Parkway South, on Thursday, Dec. 21. 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, Dec. 19, 6.30 p.m. at Serviam Gardens, A Building Theater & Lounge, 321 E 198<sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx, NY 10458. 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 on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. at In Tech Academy Library, 2975 Tibbett Avenue, Bronx, and will be a **hybrid** meeting. Access the meeting via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2114033690>. You can also join by phone on +16465588656. The code is 2114033690#. 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 in January (usually on the first Wednesday of the month) 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).



### Letters To The Editor

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

*(continued from page 8)*

in disorder.

While I don't necessarily see a problem with challenging authority, I do have a problem with it when it inconveniences the riding public. Mr. Tracy was a talented artist. I am sorry he is deceased. I hope he is in a better place, and he has eternal peace, but I simply cannot regard him as a figure worthy of adoration.

As for Richard Warren's letter, I don't hate it or feel it shouldn't have been published. I deeply believe in free speech. It would be a dull world if we all agreed. Mr. Warren doesn't feel a law making it illegal for candidates to lie is necessary but does not offer another solution to the problem. Mr. Warren called Zimmerman "stupid" for not using Mr. Santos' past against him but did not include - agree or disagree - the Zimmerman campaign's reasons for this.

Losing campaign tactics do not necessarily equal stupidity. I am not defending him; I am pointing out clarifying facts. Given the fact that

Ms. Moloney has contacted me privately to request clarification on my submissions to *Norwood News*, and how easily I located the clarifying information, yes, I feel she let it "slip." She explained why. It doesn't change my opinion of her as an honest, honorable, thorough, fair journalist.

Mr. Warren can vote for a candidate for whatever reasons he chooses and vet him/her as little as he chooses. But when you don't research the candidate you vote for and later experience buyer remorse, who is the ultimate loser?

**Nat Weiner  
Parkchester**

*Editor's Note: We understand that Mr. Warren's proposed solution to the problem is to have the candidates, themselves, carry out the necessary opposition research on their rivals.*

*Please send all letters to the editor, along with supporting hyperlinked sources, to [norwoodnews@norwood-news.org](mailto:norwoodnews@norwood-news.org) or by mail to Norwood News, 3400 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, by the Friday before each publication day. Letter writers should aim to write no more than 300 words on local issues or in response to published articles.*



# Kid, 12, Escapes from Fire Holding Baby

(continued from page 1)  
hands.”

Meanwhile, with the permission of his parent, Joshua, who lives next door, said, “I was on this side. So, when he was sleeping. I was in my room [in a separate house] just trying to my mind my own business. I was sleeping as well. I woke up earlier just to be like, well, what time is it? And I checked and there’s a smell of propane seeping through my window. I smelled it, and I asked my mom and I’m like, ‘Oh, my God!’ What’s that smell?”

Joshua said his mom went to the kitchen instantly and saw the fire in the rear of the adjacent building go from orange to blue. “It was really hot,” Joshua said. “So, she came here. I rushed out to my sister’s house, up there and I got my sisters and her kids and elders outside in time.”

FDNY officials later told *Norwood News* they received a call at 9.08 p.m. on Monday Nov. 20, for a report of a fire at 112 East 198<sup>th</sup> Street, a two-and-a-half story mixed occupancy building (20x50), located by Creston Avenue and the Grand Concourse. They said 20 units comprising 60 fire fighters and EMS personnel responded to the blaze, which they said broke out on the first-floor of the building.

They later added that there were no reported injuries and said the fire was brought under control at 10.16 p.m. that evening. According to FDNY, fire marshals are investigating the cause and origin of the fire.

On the same evening, a 57-year-old man died following a residential fire impacting two buildings in the Fordham Manor section of The Bronx, FDNY officials said.

An FDNY spokesperson later said the department received a call at 9.23 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 20, for a report of a fire at a residential building located at 2677 Bainbridge Avenue between 196th Street and 194th Street.

The spokesperson said that upon ar-

rival, firefighters discovered two houses on fire and immediately raised the incident to a 2-alarm emergency. “At 21.40 hrs, the fire escalated to a 3rd alarm, ultimately dispatching 33 units with 138 personnel,” the FDNY spokesperson told *Norwood News*.

According to fire officials, one civilian was found deceased on their arrival. Fire department officials said three firefighters were transported to area hospitals with minor injuries, following the blaze. They said the fire was brought under control at 11.46 p.m. and fire marshals are investigating the cause.

Several EMS personnel with waiting stretchers were seen on Bainbridge Avenue, as fire fighters battled the blaze in front of a large crowd of local residents who had gathered on the opposite side of the street, many filming the incident as it unfolded.

Fire and other emergency vehicles lined the block and several other surrounding streets in the immediate vicinity of the fire. News crew vehicles were also seen parked on nearby streets as two helicopters circled the area overhead.

On Tuesday night, Nov. 21, police provided an update on the victim, and confirming that FDNY personnel had responded and extinguished the fire. “A 57-year-old male was discovered inside the attic of the location and was pronounced deceased by EMS on scene,” a police spokesperson said. “The FDNY Fire Marshal will determine the cause of the fire. The investigation remains ongoing at this time. The identity of the deceased is being withheld pending family notification.”

We spoke to Lessa Fernandez, who was one of the residents standing on the street opposite the scene of the fire, and asked her if she could tell us what she had seen.

Speaking in Spanish, she said, “Well, we were relaxing at home when we heard all the fire trucks arriving from all the different streets and that made us alarmed because you know then that means something is happening.”

She continued, “And well, the neighbors there suffered this enormous accident across two houses, and thanks be to God, there were no injuries,” she said. We asked if she was sure about that. [At that point, we did not have the official fire report from FDNY.] She said, “Yes, the firefighters said there was nobody in the



Photo by Síle Moloney

**FIREFIGHTERS AND PARAMEDICS** are seen at the scene of a three-alarm fire at 2677 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor on Monday, Nov. 20, 2023. One person was found deceased at the scene, FDNY officials said.

house. So, it went off ok, nothing more than material damage but this can be recouped.”

We asked if she knew the neighbors who were affected by the fire. “No,” she said. “But, it’s an area where we all know each other [to see] and we’re, all of us, always walking around here.”

She added that when winter starts, there are always problems in the houses with central heating or the electricity. Given her comments, we asked if she knew what the cause of the fire was, she said “No, not exactly. We just know something was burning and when we all came outside, we saw the fire.”

We also spoke to Demarest Flowers, 41, about the fire. He said, “I was going to to Dollar Tree with my niece, Jayell, and it was just crazy... all of it...the flames.. it was crazy. I’ve never seen anything like that. I hope nobody got hurt.”

Flowers was walking up Briggs Avenue, the street behind where the fire broke out, on Bainbridge, when we met him. Asked if the back of his house faced the burning building on the Bainbridge side, he said he thought the fire was a bit further up the street from it. He explained that his mother lived in the house on Briggs Avenue, which was where he was going. “I’m on this side, so hopefully everyone got out safe,” he said.

On Nov. 30, an early morning fire at a construction site on the Grand Concourse resulted in no injuries, FDNY officials said. According to an FDNY spokesperson, the department received a call at 4.05 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 30 for reports of a construction fire in the vicinity of 2955 Grand Concourse, East Bedford Park Boulevard and East 201st Street.

In fact, 2955 Grand Concourse is a pre-existing residential building but a 6-story, (125 x 75) multiple dwelling con-

struction site (pictured) is located two doors down from this address at 3005 Grand Concourse. FDNY officials said 12 units, comprising 60 fire and EMS personnel responded to the call and the fire was placed under control at 4.26 a.m.

An FDNY spokesperson said there were no reported injuries and the cause remains under investigation. *Norwood News* also contacted NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) on Dec. 1 to see if the agency had any further information on the incident. Ryan Deegan, DOB deputy press secretary, said, “We weren’t called to respond to anything matching this description.” Deegan said the department would continue to check around for any information on the incident. but didn’t have any details at the time we contacted them.

He added that first responders generally only ask DOB to respond to a fire or incident in situations when they suspect there are structural stability issues at the building, or if they suspect there are other building code-related issues which they believe should be investigated. According to DOB’s website, a partial stop worker order is in place at the location.

The general contractor at the construction site is 901 Green Avenue Builders LLC, with an address at 2534 Tenbroeck Avenue in Allerton. The owner of the property is 3005 GC LLC, with an address in Elmsford, NY. Meanwhile, the website, opencorporates.com, gives a registered address for the company at 65-05 Utopia Parkway, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365.

The building was due to be completed in December 2022, according to notices placed at the site. Another notice posted to a green barrier at the site provides details of another company i.e. Reliable Enterprise Inc. with an address at 110-14 Astoria Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11369.



**AN EARLY MORNING** fire at this construction site on the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park on Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, resulted in no injuries, FDNY officials said.

**PHOTO BY SÍLE** Moloney



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