



NORWOOD NEWS

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REMEMBERING KASHMIR



Photo by Síle Moloney

IMAGES AND HOME movies of 5-year-old Kashmir Marquis, who died on Jan. 3, 2024, following a basement fire in Wakefield, are projected onto his Barnes Avenue home during a memorial event held on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024.

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Family, neighbors, teachers, school friends and work colleagues gathered on Wednesday evening, Jan. 10, for a touching memorial tribute to mark the one-week anniversary of the tragic death of five-year-old Kashmir Marquis, following a

basement fire in Wakefield.

Carrying colorful balloons, many blue and white and a few red, the gathering of about 160 people withstood the cold evening which followed the Jan. 9th rainstorm, as images and home movies of Kashmir were projected onto the façade of his

Barnes Avenue home to soft accompanying music.

A shrine of sorts, adorned with toys, candles, and a tribute poster of Kashmir had been erected in front of the family's home where people were seen lighting more candles, embracing Kashmir's mom and other

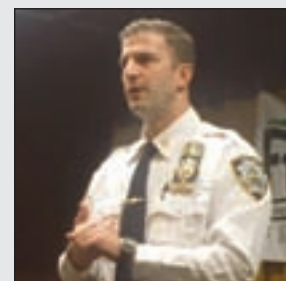
relatives, and reflecting on the loss of the little boy who had just turned 5 on Dec. 19, 2023.

Local mom Nicole told us her daughter, Nikyah, also 5, had been friends with Kashmir and had been in the same class at nearby P.S. 21 Philip H.

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Leader | pg 2**



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Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)
3400 Reservoir Oval East
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Phone: 718 324 4998
Fax: 718 324 2917
E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org
Web.: www.norwoodnews.org

Publisher

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Editor-In-Chief, Norwood News

Sile Moloney
smoloney@norwoodnews.org

Contributor

Claire Garon

Regular Contributors

David Greene, Ariel Pacheco,
Miriam Quiñones

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Photo courtesy of District 18 City Council Member Amanda Farias

DISTRICT 18 CITY Council Member
Amanda Farias

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Democratic City Council Member Amanda Farias (C.D. 18) has been appointed as NYC Council majority leader, effective Jan.3. Farias, who represents the neighborhoods of Castle Hill, Clason Point, Harding Park, Parkchester, Unionport, Shorehaven, and Soundview, said she was excited for the new role, and thanked City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams for what she described as “the enormous trust” Adams had placed in her. The Bronx city councilwoman is preceded by Manhattan Democratic City Councilman Keith Powers (C.D. 4).

“In my first two years, we have passed legislation and secured historic investments that advanced a vision of inclusion and strong representation that resonates with my neighbors in District 18, and so many more communities,” Farias said. “I am confident that in this new position, I will be able to deliver tangible results for my constituents, colleagues, and all New Yorkers alike as we work to strengthen the City we all love.”

She added, “I have every confidence this historic, diverse, and entirely female leadership team, under the leadership of Speaker Adams, will keep our commitment to all New Yorkers, further the fight for economic justice for all, and lift up the voices of those who have been marginalized by our society.”

Elected to the City Council in District 18 in 2021, Farias is chair of the Committee on Economic Development and co-chair of the Women’s Caucus. According to her biography, she is the first woman, Bronxite, and Latinx person to serve as chair of the Committee on Economic Development. As chair, she said she hosted the City’s first legislative hearings on the emerging, adult-use, cannabis industry, the NYC ferry system, and worked to ensure that economic recovery [post-pandemic] was focused on equity and prioritizes Black and Brown communities.

According to her biography, as co-chair of the Women’s Caucus, in the first women-majority city council, several bill packages have been passed addressing issues relating to women’s health and wellness, including the Support Survivors package, the Universal Childcare package, and the NYC Abor-

Democrat Amanda Farías Appointed as City Council Majority Leader

tion Rights Act. Farias said she continues to work “to create holistic improvements to the quality of life of women, trans women, and gender non-conforming people across the City.”

The new majority leader is a lifelong Bronxite, born and raised in Soundview as a second-generation Afro-Latina of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent. She said she is a proud product of local schools and community institutions having grown up attending P.S. 69X and the Holy Cross School, and having spent after-school hours and summers at the local Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club.

Farias is a graduate of Preston High School and St. John’s University with a Bachelor of Arts in government and politics, and Master of Arts in public administration. She said this was where her passion for community service, activism, and empowerment began.

The new council majority leader’s experience includes working for the New York City Council from 2013 to 2017 in several different capacities, including as director of special projects, managing the Women’s Caucus, and a districtwide Participatory Budgeting process. After her time in the council, Farias joined The Consortium for Worker Education as an assistant director in 2017, to manage workforce development programming in The Bronx. She said her programming and partnerships with CUNY, labor unions, and local community-based organizations have allowed her to create new opportunities for young Bronxites to access upward economic mobility.

During this time, Farias also served as the New York State coordinator for New American Leaders and as the co-founder of Women of Color for Progress. Through her work with these organizations, Farias said

she created a pipeline for more women to be elected to office through increased civic engagement and opportunities in electoral politics.

During the height of the pandemic, Farias said she became active in mutual aid and added that she feels most in her element when in community. She said that hosting food distributions for neighbors has been at “the core of her service to continue the fight against food insecurity and The Bronx being the unhealthiest county in New York State.”

Farias has been recognized by City and State’s “Power 100: Women,” “Power 100: Economic Development,” “Power 100: The Bronx”, and PoliticsNY “Power Players Rising.”

The city council minority leader from Staten Island, Council Member Joe Borelli (C.D. 51), leads the six Republican council members, including newly elected representative for much of the East Bronx, Councilwoman Kristy Mar-morato.

Reacting to the news, John Doyle, district leader in the 82nd Assembly District, Part B, in The Bronx, said of Farias, “Congrats to one of the hardest working elected officials in New York!”



Photo courtesy of NYC Health + Hospitals

DISTRICT 18 CITY Council Member Amanda Farias addresses those gathered at a press conference at Jacobi Medical Center in Morris Park before presenting a check of \$25,000 to support Jacobi’s Stand Up to Violence program in February 2023. The Stand Up to Violence (SUV) program is the first hospital-run, cure violence-based program in the nation.

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Bainbridge Bakery Reopens after Devastating Fire

By DAVID GREENE

Three months after a devastating fire ripped through Norwood's Bainbridge Avenue last October destroying a row of local stores, employees at the popular Bainbridge Bakery are back behind the counter and, once again, providing the community with their baked treats, the owners having opened a new store across the street from the original location.

As reported, the FDNY said they received a call at 3.49 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 10, for reports of a fire at 3117 Bainbridge Avenue, a one-story, commercial establishment located between East 205th Street and East 206th Street. The fire ultimately resulted in no injuries but destroyed several adjacent local businesses.

Norwood resident Natalie Joseph paid a visit to the new bakery on Saturday, Jan. 6. She told *Norwood News*, "I saw that they were building it, but I didn't know they were open yet. We love them because they were always so friendly and every time we'd walk in, they would have the best stuff, and they were very smiley; we love them!"

Asked if she had heard that arson was reported by authorities as the reason for the October 2023 fire, Joseph replied, "Yeah, that's what we were just talking about; we were thinking that too." Referring to her friend Roman Urbanski, a Mosholu Parkway resident who was visiting the new bakery with her, Joseph said, "He had a weird story about that night."

Urbanski then told *Norwood News*,



Photo by David Greene

CUSTOMERS QUICKLY RETURN to the new Norwood-based Bainbridge Bakery, now located at 3130 Bainbridge Avenue, as seen on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, after its old premises across the street was destroyed in an October 2023 fire.

"Yeah. That night I was trying to go to bed. It was about 10 o'clock and I smelled a lot of smoke, and I thought maybe it was from one of the new buildings outside and I went out and it was kind of smokey outside, so I called the fire department, and they came, and they just

looked around and left."

Urbanski continued, "And then I woke up and I see this [referring to the destroyed row of Bainbridge Avenue stores]. It was weird, and then I had also read that there were some trash fires. I don't know....it was something about that night."

Joseph added, "Someone was lighting fires to trash that day on Mosholu Parkway [a block or two away from Bainbridge Avenue]. Yeah. It was really weird. I can see though that... hasn't it (the building) gone on fire before, like 10 years ago?"

Norwood News previously reported on a bakery fire on the same Bainbridge block at the time it broke out on Halloween 2009, its aftermath, a legal battle which ensued between the affected merchants and their landlord over back rent, and the subsequent redevelopment of the affected site. Around ten other businesses were also affected.

Two months after the Halloween fire, in December 2009, a block south on Bainbridge between East 205th and Perry Avenue, another commercial blaze erupted, once again affecting more local businesses, including Foodtown, which has since reopened, American Diner, and Bainbridge Dental.

"Matt," another Norwood resident, later told *Norwood News* in relation

to the bakery, "I shop here. I've known them my whole life, over 20 years, and it's amazing that they're back! I'm happy for them." Asked how the holidays had been without the bakery, Matt responded, "It was horrible, but at least they're back up and running!"

Matt, who said he was on his way to do some laundry when he saw the reopened bakery, said, "That lady is pretty good; no cookies like hers anywhere else!" He added, "It's amazing; it's way better! I just congratulated her. I'm proud of her. It sucks to have something that you work so hard for to burn down."

A bakery employee later told *Norwood News*, "It's crazy what happened. When she [the owner/manager] called me that morning, I was in shock. She said, 'Did you see the news?' I said, 'What happened?' I couldn't believe it! If it happened for no reason, okay, but if somebody did that... it's crazy..."

Norwood News reached out to the FDNY regarding Urbanski's claim that firefighters were called to the scene the night before the fire broke out, as well as the claim that trash fires had been set on fire along Mosholu Parkway the same night. We did not receive an immediate response. We will share any updates we receive.

Norwood News has been trying, since October, to contact the owner of the affected building on Bainbridge Avenue which housed the various destroyed stores and which has since been demolished, for comment on the fire, and on plans for the site. Despite trying different office locations and numbers, we have been unsuccessful.

According to NYC Department of Finance and NYC Department of Buildings records, the affected building is owned, since 2011, by Bainbridge Realty Associates LLC, with an address in Brooklyn.



Photo by David Greene

BAINBRIDGE BAKERY HAS modernized after an October 2023 fire and has opened a new store across the street, as seen on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024.



Photo by David Greene

TASTY CAKES AND cookies are once more on sale at Bainbridge Bakery after it reopened across the street from its prior location and customers returned, as seen on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, as we commence another new year, we asked readers their thoughts on their hopes for 2024.



"I wish for good health for my friends and family, and happiness, and less drama in the world. I hope people can get their heads on straight and for people to recognize the corruption throughout our government, and then get up off their asses, and do something about it."

Grace Lovag,
Allerton
(currently running for NY State Assembly
A.D. 80)
Photo courtesy of Grace Lovag

Editor's Note: We asked Lovag what corruption she was referring to and she said the U.S. government and U.S. President Joe Biden, his son, Hunter Biden, and the "Democratic cabal," as well as the "Democrats' handling of immigrants."



"My hope for 2024 is that everything is better than last year [when] things haven't been good. You can't lose faith because things happen, good and bad. We have to be prepared for whatever comes. I hope my daughter can find an apartment and be independent, and I wish the best to everyone. I hope everybody hits Lotto; I don't want to see these people in the street."

Vivian Resto,
West Farms
Photo by David Greene



"My hopes for 2024 include the most important things in life: world peace and time with my loved ones. Better health as it relates to wellness and sustained recovery. An abundance of opportunity to create a life for myself that I can be proud of. This would only be possible if I can continue to reciprocate the grace I have been blessed with. I hope to dig deeper into my identity as poet, community member, leader and father and I hope to help others become their best selves too."

Felix Guzman,
Crown Heights, Brooklyn
Photo courtesy of Felix Guzman



"Oh, my hope for 2024 is long life and financial prosperity, and to get closer to my God, to be happier in my life and live positively. I hope the world can be more positive and happier, with peace and love for all."

Donna Hargrect,
West Farms
Photo by David Greene



"I hope that people can give each other grace, and to make room for one another. That can literally mean moving out of the way as you board a subway train or bus and smiling instead of scowling at a rambunctious child. It is also trying to think the best of others, assuming that someone is under stress or is hurting, rather than acting out of malice."

Mary O'Shaughnessy,
Wakefield
Photo courtesy of Mary O'Shaughnessy

Michael Heller Announces Candidacy for Re-Election as State Committee Member in A.D. 81

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Michael Heller announced Jan. 10 that he is running for re-election as a member of the New York State Democratic Committee, representing the 81st Assembly District.

Heller said he has a lifelong passion for public service and Democratic Party politics. A former president of the Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club, located in Kingsbridge, Heller said he has held every executive position over his 40-year membership.

As previously reported, during his time with the Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club, allegations regarding a lack of transparency around the mail-in ballot voting process for local candidates running for elected office who were seeking the club's endorsement were brought against Heller [and the club] during the COVID-19 pandemic. The former club president denied any wrongdoing.



MICHAEL HELLER

Dating back to high school, Heller said he has volunteered in countless campaigns. Holding a bachelor's degree in political science, and a master's degree in public administration from Columbia University, Heller said he has had an extensive career in public affairs and community/gov-

ernment relations.

This includes at Montefiore Health System / Albert Einstein College of Medicine, NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi & North Central Bronx, Maimonides Medical Center, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center (Paterson), and the New York City Transit Authority.

Heller, a former district manager of Bronx Community Board 8 (CB8) and chair of the Bronx CB8 Traffic and Transportation committee, currently serves as president of the Association of Riverdale Co-ops/Condominiums.

Describing himself as a common-sense, progressive Democrat, Heller says he looks for consensus on policies that build the Democratic Party statewide. He adds that he looks forward to another year of leadership, electing Democrats, and re-electing U.S. President Joe Biden and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris.

New Resource Guide for Sexual Assault Survivors

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Police Commissioner Edward A. Caban, First Deputy Commissioner Tania Kinsella and other NYPD executives, together with advocacy group, NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, announced on Jan. 10 that going forward, all police department facilities open to the public will display "Sexual Violence Survivor Resource Guide" wall posters depicting a quick-response code (QR code) that links to a host of free online services. These include helplines, family and child welfare services, physical and mental healthcare, financial support, legal options and more.

NYPD officials said members of The Alliance compiled the 52-page resource guide and worked with NYPD Special Victims Division leadership to determine the most efficient, effective, and safe way of quickly connecting those in need with services and additional, confidential help. They said the QR code can be scanned by any cellphone camera and is also available on smaller resource cards that can be distributed by hand.

In the context of the announcement, Kinsella said, "Today, we renew the vows of the NYPD's commitment to survivors of sexual assault." Adding that while progress had been

made over the years, she said, "We acknowledge that our journey to this point has not been met without hurdles."

Police officials said the resource guide wall posters and business cards are available in all NYPD precincts, transit districts, and police service areas throughout the five boroughs, and can be viewed and downloaded at The Alliance's website: www.svfreenyc.org. They said the guide can also be printed by NYPD staff for those in need of internet access.

For his part, Caban said, in part, "All survivors of these heinous crimes deserve the best support and guidance that we can provide." Meanwhile, Emily Miles, executive director of The Alliance, said, in part, "We want all New Yorkers to know: If you or someone you know experiences any form of sexual violence, from sexual assault, child sexual abuse, cyber sexual violence, or sexual harassment, there is support for you."

If you are a survivor of sexual violence and need access to services and support, please call Safe Horizon's 24-hour help line at 212-227-3000 for immediate assistance, or contact the NYPD Special Victims Division's 24-hour hotline at 212-267-RAPE (7273).



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New Year, New Bronxites

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Just minutes into the New Year, in some cases, The Bronx's newest residents made their presence known at various maternity units across the borough.

Montefiore Health System welcomed the first baby of 2024 born in its hospital system with the arrival of baby boy, Adam Alshawabkeh. Adam was born

to proud parents, mom, Fatima Alshawabkeh and dad, Omar Ali Hamdan Alrawashdeh, from The Bronx's Morris Park section.

"Adam was born at 12.11 a.m.," said Tracy Gurrissi, assistant vice president for strategic communications and media relations at Montefiore. "His weight was 7 pounds, 13.2 ounces, and he is 18 1/2 inches

long." Adam's birth took place at Jack D. Weiler Hospital at Montefiore in Morris Park.

Meanwhile, at NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi & North Central Bronx, Baby Boy Saint Pizarro, was born at 8.26 a.m. on Jan. 1, weighing in at 6 pounds, 8.1 ounces and measuring all of 19.69 inches. Later, another Baby Boy Enzo Caraballo was born at 12:11 a.m. on Jan.

2, and weighed in at 8 pounds, 5 ounces.

As the clock struck midnight to ring in the new year, the City's public hospital system had earlier welcomed its first baby of 2024 at its South Brooklyn Health center. According to hospital officials, the then unnamed baby boy weighed in at 7 pounds, 12.5 ounces, and measured 21 inches.

Hospital officials said the baby boy is the firstborn of his parents, who live in Flatbush, and in a curious twist, the bouncing baby boy was delivered by the same doctor who delivered the baby's father, Rafael Abitbul, 23 years earlier! Hospital officials also said the new baby is the fifth first baby of the New Year in a row for the hospital.



Photo courtesy of Montefiore Health System

BABY BOY ADAM Alshawabkeh, the first baby to be born in 2024 in the Montefiore Health System, arrived at 12.11 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2024. He is pictured here with his proud parents, mom, Fatima Alshawabkeh, and dad, Omar Ali Hamdan Alrawashdeh, along with a member of the Montefiore natal team.



Photo courtesy of NYC Health + Hospitals

AT NYC HEALTH + Hospitals/Jacobi & North Central Bronx, Baby Boy Saint Pizarro was born at 8.26 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2024. He is pictured with his loving mother, Tabitha.



Photo courtesy of NYC Health + Hospitals

AT NYC HEALTH + Hospitals/Jacobi & North Central Bronx, Baby Boy Enzo Caraballo was born at 12:11 a.m. on Jan. 2, 2024. He is pictured with his loving parents, Anny Valladares and Dario Caraballo.



Photo courtesy of NYC Health + Hospitals

A BOUNCING BABY boy, seen here with his father, Rafael Abitbul, was the first baby born in the City's public hospital system in 2024, arriving on the stroke of midnight on Jan. 1, 2024, at NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health, formerly NYC Health + Hospitals/Coney Island.

NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Friends of Devoe Park Honored

Friends of Devoe Park (FoDP) are being honored on Jan. 25 by State Sen. Robert Jackson (S.D. 31) with the New York State Empire award in recognition of what has been described as the group's exceptional service to District 31 in 2023.

Precinct Commanding Officer Updates

Effective Dec. 7, 2023, the newly appointed commanding officer of the 52nd Precinct, which covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Bronx Park, and University Heights, is Captain Chase Maneri. According to the NYPD, Maneri joined the NYPD in January 2008.

They said his past assignments include, but are not limited to, the 30th Precinct, as a police officer, the 48th Precinct as a sergeant, the 44th Precinct as a lieutenant, and the Detective Bureau as a captain. Additionally, they said Maneri was assigned as a commanding officer of Police Service Area 5, which serves New York City Housing Authority developments in the 23rd, 25th, and 28th precincts in Manhattan.

Meanwhile, former commanding officer of the 52, Deputy Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, has been appointed commanding officer of the 46th Precinct, which covers Fordham, University Heights, Morris Heights, and Mount Hope, replacing Inspector John J. Potkay.

Captain Ryan J. Pierce has been appointed as the new commanding officer of the 50th Precinct, which covers Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, Riverdale, Fieldston, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Park.

According to NYPD records, Pierce became a police officer in 2006, was promoted to sergeant in 2012, lieutenant in 2016 and captain in 2020. Over the course of his career, he has made a total of 82 arrests to date, 71 for misdemeanors and 11 for felonies. Pierce replaces Capt. Filastine Srour, who is now assigned to Patrol Borough Bronx.

Applications Open for School Tax Relief Program

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) has highlighted that applications are open for School Tax Relief (STAR) and Enhanced School Tax Relief (E-STAR) benefits, offering eligible New York State homeowners property tax relief. Homeowners not currently receiving the STAR exemption who meet the program's eligibility requirements may apply for the STAR tax credit with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Those who qualify for the credit will be issued

with a check.

You may apply for the Basic STAR or Enhanced STAR tax exemption with the NYC Department of Finance if you owned your property and received STAR in 2015-16 but later lost the benefit and would like to apply to restore it. Your income must be \$250,000 or less to be eligible for Basic STAR. You can also apply if you currently receive Basic STAR and would like to apply for Enhanced STAR. You may be eligible for Enhanced STAR if you are 65 or older in the calendar year during which you apply. The total income of all owners, resident spouses, or registered domestic partners cannot exceed \$98,700. If you qualify for the exemption, it will be applied to your property tax bill. You will not be issued a check.

You may also be eligible for other property tax exemptions. If you currently receive STAR or E-STAR as a property tax exemption and earn \$250,000 or less, you can register for the STAR credit to receive a check instead. You may receive a more significant benefit with the credit, as the amount of the STAR credit will increase in the future, but the value of the exemption will not. To learn more, visit WWW.tax.ny.gov/star or contact the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at (518) 457-2036.

Montefiore Awarded \$2 Million Training Grant

The Community Health Worker Institute (CHWI) at Montefiore Medical Center has received a \$2 million grant from the New York State Department of Health to create a robust program to serve as a new model for prospective and current community health worker (CHW) instruction and support. Medical professionals say there is a growing recognition that CHWs, local experts who fill gaps between medical care and social services, represent an enormous opportunity to address challenges in healthcare access and improve overall health outcomes.

They say despite their importance, inconsistencies in education and training prevent CHWs from reaching their full potential. Representatives from Montefiore Medical Center say the CHWI at Montefiore launched in 2021, and that to date, CHWs have completed certificate training through Hostos Community College. They said as CHWs were deployed throughout Montefiore's primary care, OBGYN and specialty locations, leaders of the institute saw an opportunity for enhanced education and training standards that would open pathways for CHW's upward career mobility and improve their consistency and effectiveness.

Nationwide, CHWs have various job descriptions and training across healthcare settings. Most basic CHW training programs include approximately 81 hours of educational activities and 80 hours of on-the-job training. Courtesy of this new grant, Montefiore's bolstered CHW program will include 160 hours of education and approximately 2,000 hours of supervised engagement with patients. An additional 16 CHWs

will also be trained from this funding.

Through the new funding, CHWs will be compensated as they participate in an enhanced intensive four-week training spanning data management to social service workshops that lay the foundation for how to navigate systems and help families with their most pressing needs like housing security and quality, food security, transportation, access to healthcare, child/adult care, and legal services.

They will also have a full year of supervised practice experience. Once enough job hours are completed and coursework is passed, trainees will have the opportunity to earn full NYS Department of Labor recognized apprenticeship certification.

We Are the Bronx Fellowship Against Hate Launches

We Are the Bronx Fellowship Against Hate (WATBFAH) is a local response to the challenge of rising hate. The initiative was launched by the Riverdale Y, in partnership with the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of New York, and the Mayor's Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, as part of the Partners Against the Hate (PATH-Forward) initiative, The Bronx Community Foundation and the Office

of District 11 City Council Member Eric Dinowitz.

WATBFAH representatives say they welcome applicants who serve in mid to senior level roles from any Bronx-based nonprofit, faith-based, or government organizations that serve as messengers and partners within their respective communities to combat and respond to bias-motivated violence. They said sessions will feature speakers, workshops, and site visits, and will be supplemented by an overnight trip to Philadelphia and Washington D.C., museum visits, and additional bonding and learning opportunities.

In order to truly understand and gain appreciation for the diversity of The Bronx, they said each session will be held in a different neighborhood and all locations will be easily accessible by public transit. They said fellows will be given the opportunity to use seed grant funding to create programming designed to bring communities, including their own organizations, together in meaningful ways. For questions about the fellowship, contact Scott Kalmikoff, director of community engagement at skalmikoff@riverdaley.org or on (347) 913-4432.

First Death in Custody of 2024 on Rikers Confirmed



Photo courtesy of the Office of Assembly Member Zohran Mamdani

A GROUP OF State elected officials joined family members of those detained on Rikers Island for a press conference following an unannounced visit to the jail on Thursday, April 6, 2023.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The first person to die in custody in New York City in 2024 was announced on Jan. 4. Latima Johnson, press officer with NYC Department of Correction (DOC) identified the person as Chima Williams, age 43. Johnson said Williams' next of kin had been notified.

DOC Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, who recently replaced former DOC Commissioner Louis Molina, amid some controversy

over public spending, said of Williams' death, "On behalf of the New York City Department of Correction, we extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Williams' loved ones. We are conducting a full investigation into this tragic event."

Prior to the identification of Williams, Annais Morales, DOC press secretary, had released the following statement earlier on Jan. 4, saying in part, "Earlier this morning, a person

(continued on page 8)

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Norwood/Bedford Park: Four Sought for Robbery & Stabbing



The NYPD is asking the public for help identifying the group seen in the accompanying photo left who they say are wanted in connection with an armed robbery and stabbing that occurred on the border of Norwood and Bedford Park on Christmas Eve.

Police said that on Sunday, Dec. 24, at around 5.30 p.m. on the mezzanine of

the Mosholu Parkway subway station, five people approached a male victim, 44, and after a verbal dispute, struck and stabbed the victim multiple times. Police said they then stole the victim's cell phone and fled the location on foot to parts unknown.

Police said the victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. They

said the group sought are described as three males and one female, estimated to be between 20 and 25 years of age, with dark complexions. They said the photo of the group was obtained from near the incident location after it occurred.

Fordham Manor: Three Sought after Shooting

The NYPD is asking for



the public's help locating the people seen in the accompanying photo above who they say are sought

in connection to a non-fatal shooting that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Thursday, Dec. 21, at around 12.40 p.m., at University Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road, a male victim, 24, was approached by three people riding on two mopeds.

They said one fired a gun at the victim, striking in him in the left arm.

Patrol Borough: Bronx		Precinct: 052					
CompStat Book		Week of 01/01/24 - 01/07/24					
		28 Day			Year to Date		
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
Rape	0.0 %	3	0	- %	0	0	0.0 %
Robbery	-21.4 %	53	50	6.0 %	11	14	-21.4 %
Felony Assault	200.0 %	53	35	51.4 %	15	5	200.0 %
Burglary	-100.0 %	12	19	-36.8 %	0	8	-100.0 %
Grand Larceny	33.3 %	57	53	7.5 %	12	9	33.3 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-36.4 %	28	26	7.7 %	7	11	-36.4 %
Total	-4.3 %	206	184	12.0 %	45	47	-4.3 %
Patrol	-2.2 %	202	182	11.0 %	45	46	-2.2 %
Transit	0.0 %	4	1	300.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
Housing	-100.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %
Shooting Victims	100.0 %	5	3	66.7 %	2	1	100.0 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	4	3	33.3 %	1	1	0.0 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
UCR Rape*	0.0 %	3	3	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
Other Sex Crimes	-66.7 %	6	10	-40.0 %	1	3	-66.7 %
Petit Larceny	2.6 %	152	149	2.0 %	40	39	2.6 %
Misd. Assault	200.0 %	75	44	70.5 %	21	7	200.0 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %

Source and image courtesy of the NYPD via Compstat

MAIN CRIME STATISTICS for the last month (left column), as well as year-to-date main crimes (right column), both as of Jan. 7, 2023 for the 52nd Precinct.

Patrol Borough: Bronx		Precinct: All					
CompStat Book		Week of 01/01/24 - 01/07/24					
		28 Day			Year to Date		
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	-50.0 %	2	11	-81.8 %	1	2	-50.0 %
Rape	-45.5 %	23	29	-20.7 %	6	11	-45.5 %
Robbery	7.0 %	452	405	11.6 %	107	100	7.0 %
Felony Assault	0.0 %	581	543	7.0 %	152	152	0.0 %
Burglary	-22.0 %	201	203	-1.0 %	46	59	-22.0 %
Grand Larceny	14.7 %	629	576	9.2 %	164	143	14.7 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-31.6 %	332	412	-19.4 %	67	98	-31.6 %
Total	-3.9 %	2,220	2,179	1.9 %	543	565	-3.9 %
Patrol	-4.0 %	2,063	2,031	1.6 %	499	520	-4.0 %
Transit	150.0 %	33	18	83.3 %	10	4	150.0 %
Housing	-17.1 %	124	130	-4.6 %	34	41	-17.1 %
Shooting Victims	25.0 %	20	34	-41.2 %	5	4	25.0 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	18	26	-30.8 %	4	4	0.0 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	2	2	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
UCR Rape*	-23.1 %	42	43	-2.3 %	10	13	-23.1 %
Other Sex Crimes	-41.4 %	75	67	11.9 %	17	29	-41.4 %
Petit Larceny	-6.0 %	1,303	1,315	-0.9 %	252	268	-6.0 %
Misd. Assault	13.3 %	871	716	21.6 %	188	166	13.3 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	1	1	0.0 %	1	1	0.0 %

Source and image courtesy of the NYPD via Compstat

MAIN CRIME STATISTICS for the last month (left column), as well as year-to-date main crimes (right column), both as of Jan. 7, 2023 for The Bronx.

First Death in Custody of 2024 on Rikers Confirmed

(continued from page 7)

in custody died at the Eric M. Taylor Center [located on Rikers' Island jail]. The department will make notification to the federal monitor, the State Attorney General, DOI, the Board of Correction, the State Commission of Correction, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner."

The statement continued, "At approximately 9:45 this morning, a group of people in custody were playing bas-

ketball at the EMTC for approximately one hour. One individual collapsed and received immediate medical care from staff and medical professionals. Sadly, the individual was pronounced dead. As with any death of a person in custody, the department will conduct a full investigation and will cooperate with all outside investigative entities."

Rikers Island has long been plagued with a reputation for violence breaking out both between incarcerated individu-

als, as well as between DOC officers and people in custody. Some elected officials who visited the jail described the conditions as "unsafe" and "inhumane."

Williams' death has reignited calls for the transfer of management of the jail from City to federal authorities. This follows prior reported attempts to potentially delay its closure beyond 2027.

On Dec. 20, 2023, New York City Council voted to pass legislation that would ban solitary confinement in City jails. The law means all people in City custody would have at least 14 hours of out-of-cell time in shared spaces and the new disciplinary process established by the bill would allow separation from the general population only in instances

where a person engages in a violent incident while in custody. What was classified as solitary confinement by some in the past has been disputed by others.

Darren Mack, co-director of Freedom Agenda, gave his reaction to Williams' death, saying, "Today, yet another family is grieving the loss of their loved one in the custody of the City of New York. This shameful tragedy makes the stakes even more clear – we need to stop sending people to Rikers to die **right now**. We need the mayor to make real, substantial investments in housing, mental health treatment, and other services to support people in our communities, and we have to close that death camp down with the urgency it deserves."

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Letters To The Editor

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

Keep Those Letters Coming...

Congratulations to my fellow 2023 Letter to the Editor writers. Surveys reveal that "Letters to The Editor" is one of the most widely read and popular sections of any newspaper.

Most newspapers will print letters submitted by any writer regardless of where they live so long as the topic is relevant to readers. It helps to have a snappy introduction, good hook, be timely, precise, have an interesting or different viewpoint to increase your odds of being published. Many papers welcome letters commenting on their own editorials, articles, or previously published letters to the editor.

I continue to be grateful that the *Norwood News* affords both me and my fellow letter writers the opportunity to express our views, as well as differing opinions on issues of the day.

Please join me, along with your neighbors, in reading the *Norwood News*. Patronize their advertisers; they provide the revenues necessary to keep them in business. This helps pay to provide space for your favorite or not-so-favorite letter writers.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

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

They said he was transferred by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition, and that the group fled on the mopeds eastbound on West Kingsbridge Road.



Fordham Manor: E-Bike Rider Sought after Shooting

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 to an assault that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Monday, Dec. 18, at around 8.30 p.m., in front of 91 West Fordham Road, a person riding an e-bike approached a male victim, 28, who was seated in a parked car. Police said the e-bike rider shot at the victim, causing a graze wound to his left shoulder. They said the victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition and the suspect fled on the e-bike in an unknown direction.



Norwood Teen Arrested in Gang Assault

The NYPD said four people have been arrested, including one teen from Norwood, following a gang assault that occurred in Fordham Heights. They said that on Monday, Jan. 1, at around 8.47 p.m., a group of four approached a 29-year-old male victim on the southbound "D" train platform of the 182nd Street-183rd Street subway station. They said the victim wished the four a "Happy New Year" and subsequently became entangled in a verbal dispute with them.

They said as the dispute escalated, the group allegedly and repeatedly punched the

victim multiple times in the face and body. Police added that acting in concert, the victim was stabbed by one of the four numerous times. They said the group later fled on foot to parts unknown and the victim was removed by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in serious but stable condition.

A video and photo of those sought for questioning were later released by police and on Jan. 8, the NYPD said two males were arrested the same day. They said Emmanuel Awah, 19 from Mt. Eden and Elias Afflada, 19, from the Concourse section of The Bronx, were charged with attempted murder, robbery, and assault. On Jan. 9, police said a 16-year-old male was arrested on Jan. 8 at 8.58 p.m. and was charged with attempted murder, robbery and three counts of assault.

Also on Jan. 9, police said on that Abdul Abdulai, 18 of Norwood was also arrested on Jan. 9 at 10.55 p.m. and was charged with attempted criminally negligent homicide, robbery, and three counts of assault. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Former B.R.A.G. Program Director Gets 10 Years

Michael Rodriguez, 49, of Yonkers and former program director for the Bronx north-west site of local cure violence group, Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.), has been sentenced for drug-related charges in Orange County, NY, as confirmed by Orange County District Attorney (DA) officials on Jan. 4.

They said the defendant was sentenced to an aggregate term of 10 years in prison, to be followed by 5 years of post-release supervision, relating to his previously entered guilty pleas to charges of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, and conspiracy in the second degree. As reported, Rodriguez was arrested in August 2023.

DA officials said the defendant previously agreed to forfeit a car, and \$165,000 as ill-gotten proceeds of his crimes. The court heard that Rodriguez was accused of supplying cocaine to narcotics dealers in the City of Middletown and the City of Port Jervis and pos-

sessing two illegal handguns.

When we reached out last year to Good Shepherd Services, the nonprofit which oversees B.R.A.G., and which receives government funding, for comment on Rodriguez's arrest, a B.R.A.G. spokesperson said, "We are aware of the investigation and the charges that have been made. While we work to learn more, our primary focus remains on the communities we serve and our programs that are helping to keep them safe." We reached out once more for comment following Rodriguez's sentencing. We did not receive an immediate response.

At one of B.R.A.G.'s 2023 summer barbecues held in Fordham Manor, a representative for the group said, "Cure violence is about credible messengers. We maintain our community's safety, so this is about coming together as a community and making sure we denounce violence, and what we do is done in a peaceful way."

In a prior interview with *Norwood News* last year, we asked Rodriguez if he felt the gun violence epidemic was more of a problem of the availability of guns or culture / fear / mindset. He replied in part, "Oh, we all know that guns are not made here [in The Bronx/New York]. Basically we're the only borough that has an I95 pipeline, you know what I'm saying? What's going on? The guns are accidentally falling off the truck? We know that, so we asking the State officials, elected officials, you know, to put a better stop to that."

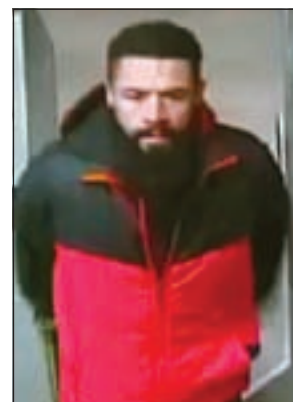


Photo by Síle Moloney
MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ

Kingsbridge: NYPD Release Video of Police-Involved Shooting

The NYPD released, in December 2023, video footage of the police-involved shooting that occurred on April 13, 2023 on the elevated train tracks at Broadway and 231st Street in Kingsbridge. As reported at the time, the male victim was hospitalized after the shooting, following an apparent stand-off on the elevated train track between police and the man who officers understood at the time was armed with a gun, and which later appeared to have been an imitation gun.

Witnesses reported seeing a man on the elevated train track at 238th Street subway station armed with a gun and acting erratically, police said. The video can be watched on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LUbRr79l1s>.



Fordham Heights: Man Arrested After Fatal Stabbing

NYPD officials said a man, 31, has been arrested after the fatal stabbing of a second man, 61, in Fordham Heights. Police had been asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they said was sought for questioning in connection with the incident.

Police said that on Friday, Jan. 5, at around 1.30 a.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding a man who had been assaulted at 2415 Creston Avenue. They said upon arrival, officers saw a male victim, 61, with multiple stab wounds about the neck and torso. They said EMS transported the male to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was subsequently pronounced deceased.

Police later said the victim had been followed by a suspect into a building located in the vicinity of Creston Avenue and East 184th Street. They added that after the assault the suspect left the building and fled to parts unknown. They later identified

the victim as Tyrone Padilla of Creston Avenue in Fordham Heights.

On Jan. 10, police said that pursuant to an ongoing investigation, Gregory Hightower, 31, of Brooklyn was arrested the same day and charged with murder. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

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.

Former Norwood Teacher Joseph McCarthy Laid to Rest

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Former Norwood teacher and Perry Avenue resident, Joseph McCarthy, died on Sunday, Jan. 7, aged 79. The news was confirmed by his brother, John, who described Joe as a local influential figure and community leader in the '60s '70s and '80s, who was heavily involved with the local school board.

As detailed in his obituary, published on Farenga Brothers Funeral Home, "A lifelong resident of The Bronx, Joe was born into a large and loving Irish Catholic family on April 2, 1944. The second eldest of nine children, he attended St. Brendan's in the Norwood section of The Bronx. Upon graduation, he went to Cathedral High School in Manhattan, and then onto Dunwoodie Seminary in Yonkers where he met many lifelong friends."

It continued, "He soon discovered that his true calling was to work with the students and families within the New York City Department of Education. For over 40 years, he proudly served in many different roles including: classroom teacher; school administrator and director of special education, to name a few. During his early years of teaching hearing-impaired students in Manhattan, he met the love of his

life, Ann McLoughlin.

They were married on March 29, 1980, at St. Jean Baptiste in Manhattan. Joe and Ann moved to Woodlawn in 1985, where they raised their daughters Kate and Crissie, and enjoyed the many friendships that were developed over the years.

In his later years, Joe developed many passions and interests, including being a founding member of the Woodlawn Civilian Patrol; serving as president of the Woodlawn Taxpayers Association; volunteering as a member of the Auxiliary Coast Guard; being a lector at St. Barnabas Church, and going on mission trips with the HOPE Charity to Honduras and Ethiopia.

Without a doubt, his favorite passion was being 'Pop' to his grandchildren, Ava and Mason, who always knew how to make him smile. His favorite days were spent watching his beloved New York Yankees; going on weekend trips to the Poconos, and enjoying summer vacations in Cape May, New Jersey with his family who he loved more than anything in the world.

Joe was filled with love, warmth, and compassion, al-



Photo courtesy of the family of Joseph McCarthy via Hodder Farenga Funeral Home
JOSEPH MCCARTHY, APRIL 2, 1944 - January 7, 2024

ways greeting everyone with a smile and a kind word. He will be deeply missed by all his family and friends.

Joe is survived by his loving wife of 43 years, Ann (née McLoughlin), his daughter, Kate, and her husband, Billy Slattery, his daughter, Crissie, his beloved grandchildren, Ava Kelly and Mason Joseph, and his siblings John, Nora, Katherine O'Reilly, Gerard, Edward (Charo) and Hope.

He was also a dear broth-

er-in-law to Charles (Bud) and Terais McLoughlin and Thomas and Mildred Miller as well as an uncle and great uncle to many nieces and nephews. Joe was predeceased by his parents, John and Rita (née Quinlan), [who had moved from the South Bronx] his sisters, Rita and Mary Anne, his brother-in-law, Jack O'Reilly, his great nephew, John Peter O'Reilly, and his in-laws, Charles and Mildred McLoughlin.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Cardinal McCloskey Community Services (<https://cmcs.org/>) or HOPE Charity (<https://hope-charity.org/>) would be greatly appreciated by the family."

Speaking to *Norwood News*, John mentioned that Joe later moved up to Woodlawn, and had worked as a campaign manager for the late U.S. President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Of Joe's time on the school board in the late '60s, smiling, John said, "There were representatives from the Catholic schools and the public schools. He was kind of in the middle. He taught in the public school but went to Catholic school, so he was sort of the link between the two."

He added that both Joe's wife and daughter are also involved in the teaching profession.

According to John, and as detailed on the website of Farenga Brothers Funeral Home, Joseph's viewing will be held on Friday, Jan. 12, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Hodder Farenga Funeral Home, 899 McLean Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704. Funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, Jan. 13, at 10 a.m. at St. Barnabas Church, 409 E 241st St, Bronx, NY 10470. Interment will follow at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery, 10 W. Stevens Avenue, Hawthorne, NY 10573, also on Saturday, Jan. 13, at 11:30 a.m.

John said Joe had initially been diagnosed with sleep apnea and later with Alzheimer's. "When someone's been suffering for months and months and months and months, it's really a blessing," he said of his brother's death. "When you're hit or run over by a car or someone comes to shoot you in the head, that's a tragedy, but he's in a much better place. Sitting here and just suffering, suffering, suffering, he's much better off. He had a really good life."

To share photos or tributes to Joe, visit <https://www.farengabrothersfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Joseph-A-Mccarthy?obId=30288710>.

Cardinal Hayes Football Day Declared after School's Victory

By ARIEL PACHECO

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson hosted a celebration for the Cardinal Hayes High School football team on Dec. 21 at Bronx Borough Hall, after the South Bronx school won its first state championship against St. Francis High School 40-22.

"Tonight is a great night of celebration," said Gibson at the event. "You all have done something never been done before across our great city. I want to say, 'thank you' because I know this victory was not easy."

Cardinal Hayes High School is the first New York City school to win the Catholic League's AAA State Title and is considered one of the top honors in Northeast high school sports. The celebration featured a live performance by the Cardinal Hayes Marching Band as well as a dinner.

In addition, Gibson also declared Dec. 2 "Cardinal Hayes Football Day" to mark the school's victory. That win did not come easy, as the team was forced to overcome several obstacles over the course of the season. The Cardinals were not able to use their home field the

entire season.

They were 12-2 going into the championship game, and under normal circumstances would have hosted the game in their home field in Macombs Dam Park, close to Yankee Stadium. However, the synthetic turf field wasn't properly maintained as the field was filled with divots and the park's lighting system was also out on one side.

At the celebratory event at Borough Hall was former New York Jets running back Tony Richardson who gave a speech congratulating the school team on their feat. "When you talk about grit, perseverance, and overcoming obstacles, this is a classic example," said Richardson. "What these young men have been able to accomplish and what they will accomplish in the future is amazing."

In addition to the referenced obstacles encountered by the team, the Cardinals also endured an accidental fire that broke out in the coach's office which required the replacement of equipment and meetings to be held in the gymnasium hallway. Meanwhile, the weight room had deteriorated to the point where the team began lifting weights in the



Photo by Ariel Pacheco
(L TO R) Michael Carey, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, and Tony Richardson pose for a photo at Bronx Borough Hall on December 21, 2023.

school's parking lot, even in the rain.

The Cardinals championship win comes after bouncing back from a 2-8 record the previous season. "At 2-8, in a society where most kids are jumping into the transfer portal, and getting sad, and want to go home, they went to work," said head coach C.J. O'Neill. "They went into the off-season, and they believed in themselves.

Resilience is something we believe in at Cardinal Hayes."

Meanwhile, Michael Carey is president of Cardinal Hayes High School and is in his 4th year in that role. "It's awesome for the students, the players, and their families, and also for the school at large because it's never been done before," he said. "The atmosphere has been filled with excitement and just joy. They went through a lot of adversity and had a tough year last year. They earned it for sure."

Each player on the team was presented with an award to commemorate their championship victory. They later posed for photos with Cardinal Hayes High School leadership, coaches, and with Gibson.

The Cardinals were led by team captain and quarterback Rich Belin who is being recruited by Princeton, though still a Junior. He was named the league's best offensive player and was named MaxPreps New York High School Football Player of the Year. "It's just been unreal for me and my teammates," said Belin.

Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

Celebrate **Edgar Allan Poe's 215th birthday** at his last permanent home, the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage in Fordham on Friday, Jan. 19. The Edgar Allan Poe Cottage will be open all day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., for this special event. Join The Bronx County Historical Society and local poets and authors for a day of tours, readings of Poe's poetry, and readings of original poetry and stories. The event is free and open to the public. The Poe Cottage is located at 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY. Contact Roger McCormack for more information at education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org or 718-881-8900 Ext. 107.

The Bronx Historical Society will be hosting **A Salute to Bronx History** on Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 6 p.m. at Zero Otto Nove Restaurant, 2357 Arthur Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458, hosted by famous Chef Roberto. For more information, contact tbrown@bronxhistoricalsociety.org or call (718) 881 8900 Ext. 103.

MUSIC

Bronx Opera will be performing Il signor Bruschini by Rossini and Giani Schicchi by Puccini in English on Saturday, Feb. 3, and Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7.30 p.m. and on Sunday, Feb. 4, and Sunday, Feb. 11, at 2.30 p.m. at the Lovinger Theatre

at Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, The Bronx. Tickets can be purchased at www.bronxopera.org.

The Riverdale Choral Society invites singers of all levels to join for rehearsals for the Spring season. Open rehearsals will be held on two Wednesdays, Jan. 10 and Jan. 17, at 7 p.m. at Christ Church Riverdale, 5040 Henry Hudson Pkwy East (W. 252nd St. and Henry Hudson Parkway East), where there is on-street parking and easy access to public transportation. Subsequent rehearsals will take place every Wednesday at 7 p.m. All voice ranges: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass are welcome. Rehearsals will be conducted by music director Mun-Tzung Wong. Singers who join the Choral Society will be preparing for a concert on Sunday, May 5, with works by Benjamin Britten, James Mulholland, Astor Piazzolla, Paul Carey, and John Corigliano, as well as folk songs from American and Irish traditions. Those who love singing, including those who do not read music but have a good musical ear, are encouraged to consider joining. Additional information can be obtained at www.riverdalechoral.org or by calling (718) 543-2219.

THEATER

Riverdale Children's Theatre presents **The Wizard of Oz** at the Hayes Auditorium, College of Mount Saint Vincent, 6301 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471 on Friday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 13, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 14, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Monday, Jan. 15, at 2 p.m. All seats are \$20 and can be reserved online at www.riverdaletheatre.org.

Kick off the new year with a show during **"NYC Broadway Week"** from Jan. 16 to Feb. 4. 2-for-1 NYC Broadway Week tickets are making a comeback this winter and there's a show for everyone: choose from comedies, musicals, plays and more. Pair a Broadway show with a great meal. Add NYC Restaurant Week® to your plans — prix-fixe menus available at \$30, \$45, and \$60. Visit https://www.nyc tourism.com/broadway-week/?cid=NYCEM_WBW24. BookingsOpen [20240109](https://www.nyc tourism.com/broadway-week/?cid=NYCEM_WBW24) for more details.

DANCE

Participants aged 6 to 18 are invited to join **The Bronx All Star Dance Team** at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467 from Jan. 4 to March 23 on Thursdays at 5 p.m. and Saturdays at 11 a.m. to learn fun and energetic dance styles. Sessions last one hour. Participants must have an NYC Parks & Recreation Center membership card. Membership is free for those under 24. Call (718) 543 8372 for more information or email Kelsey.Phoenix@parks.nyc.gov.

The Ballet of Cinderella. The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, located on the campus of Lehman College/CUNY at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468, is proud to present **The Ballet of Cinderella**, performed by the State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine on Friday, Jan. 19, at 7.30 p.m. Presented by Classical Arts Entertainment, the Ballet of Cinderella will be a two-act performance with an incredible score by Sergei Prokofiev and captivating choreography by Andrei Litvinov. Tickets

can be purchased by calling (718) 960-8833 or online at <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/cinderella>.

ART

Visit <https://www.upparent.com/lists/free-museum-days-nyc> to check out **Free Museum Days** in New York City during 2024.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Join En Foco Inc., the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater and Pregones/PRTT, located at 571 Walton Avenue, Bronx NY 10451, on Saturday, Jan. 13, for **Sophie Rivera: Beyond the Lens**, a panel discussion highlighting the person, life, and legacy of Puerto Rican street photographer Sophie Rivera. The panel, organized by En Foco's president, Bill Aguado, features Marisol Díaz-Gordon, Rocío Aranda-Alvarado, and Nina Kuo. The discussion is attached to the current exhibition, **Boricua lens: Sophie Rivera Portraits** on view at Pregones/PRTT until April 4. It is also an initiative of the Nueva Luz Study Center (NLSC) and is part of En Foco's efforts to preserve the culture and legacy of diasporic lens-based artists.

MOVEMENT

Dance, Fun & Fitness classes will take place on Wednesdays from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood. The classes consist of nonstop rhythmic cardio conditioning, utilizing different genres of dance and basic bodyweight exercises, all set to high-energy music, designed to give you a full body workout.

NYC Health Department to Study Long-term Effects of COVID-19

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is launching a multi-year research study of long-term outcomes among adults infected with COVID-19, City officials announced on Jan. 10. They said the health department will recruit up to 10,000 participants for the study when it launches this year and will follow up with them over several years.

Building on various surveys that have already been carried out nationally and locally, health officials said the series of surveys will produce New York City-specific data on how COVID-19 impacts individuals over time. The City's health commissioner, Dr. Ashwin Vasani, said, "We know that the end of an emergency must also be the beginning of a process of learning and understanding so we are better prepared and can support COVID survivors over time."

He added, in part, "This work will inform the future of care people receive. It will also develop our understanding of the disease and expand our knowledge of what people are experiencing, which can be confusing and disorienting without this understanding. We are proud to be entrusted with this effort, are grateful to the participants, and look forward to the work ahead."

Health officials said the data collected will inform policy makers and program planners on the needs and barriers to support services for those experiencing long-term physical and mental health problems. Throughout the course of the project, they said the health department team will work with community-based partners who serve communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as organizations supporting Long COVID research and advocacy.

The Bronx was one of the New York State counties which was the most impacted by COVID per head of population. Health officials said the panel of partners will provide subject matter expertise and awareness of issues of importance to people living with Long COVID.

Dr. Amanda K. Johnson, director of the "AfterCare" program and assistant



Photo courtesy of the Milken Institute via Flickr

DR. ASHWIN VASANI, NYC health commissioner, speaks on closing gaps in health and healthcare during the 2023 Future of Health Summit held in Washington D.C., November 6-8, 2023.

vice president of ambulatory care and population health at NYC Health + Hospitals, said, in part, of the study, "I want to assure New Yorkers recovering from COVID-19 or living with Long COVID that you are not alone — connections to care and other resources are a phone call away."

New Yorkers recovering from COVID-19 or Long COVID can be connected to care by calling 212-

COVID19 to reach NYC Health + Hospitals AfterCare program and be connected to its three COVID-19 Centers of Excellence. Health officials said NYC Health + Hospitals' COVID-19 Centers of Excellence in The Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn offer state-of-the-art short and long-term follow-up care for Long COVID patients.

They said the centers support New Yorkers recovering from Long COVID through a range of specialty care, in-

cluding pulmonary care and supplemental oxygen, cardiological care, diagnostic radiology services, comprehensive mental health services, and examination rooms with negative pressure systems to safely see patients who may have COVID-19.

In other NYC Health + Hospitals news, the public health service also announced on Jan. 10 the launch of a new podcast, *The Remedy*, featuring leaders and health care providers from the nation's largest municipal health care system.

Meanwhile, Johnson said she was grateful to the City's health department for using the power of public health to reach communities, understand their needs, and support their collective recovery."

She added, "AfterCare's work, contacting over a half million New Yorkers recovering from COVID-19 and the health department's launch of a comprehensive study of the complex, multisymptomatic impacts of Long COVID will ensure no one in our city suffers in silence, and that New Yorkers have access to the most helpful resources available."

Listen to *The Remedy* online here: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/the-remedy/>.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has open affordable housing lotteries for housing units at the following locations:

- 2072 Anthony Ave., Bronx, NY 10457, with a deadline of Feb. 12, 2024;
- 1761 Walton Ave., Bronx, NY 10453, with a deadline of Feb. 13, 2024;
- 3073 Barker Ave., Bronx, NY 10467, with a deadline of Feb. 1, 2024;
- 2330 Cambreleng Ave, Bronx, NY 10458, with a deadline of Jan. 18, 2024;
- Betances VI Family Apartments, 405 E 146th St, Bronx, NY 10455, with a deadline of Feb. 13, 2024.

Visit <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/search-lotteries> for more information.

Bronx DA's Youth Advisory Council

Bronx residents aged 14-20 are invited to join as soon as possible the Bronx District Attorney's Office Youth Advisory Council to become advocates for change and to share with the DA, valuable insights and perspectives on matters affecting them and their community such

as gun violence, youth safety, community engagement, conflict mediation and the influence of music and social media. Email ceu@bronxda.nyc.gov with any questions.

Curbside Christmas Tree Collection

NYC Department of Sanitation will collect unadorned (naked) Christmas Trees left for pick-up in The Bronx between Jan. 5 and Jan. 13. No bags, stands or ornaments.

No Curbside Collection on Rev. Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The New York City Department of Sanitation announced that there will be no trash, curbside compost or recycling collection on Monday, Jan. 15, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Residents who normally receive Monday trash, curbside compost or recycling collection may place their material out at the curb Monday evening for collection beginning Tuesday, January 16.

Shared Work Program

NYS Department of Labor is seeking to help nonprofits which may be encounter-

ing various hurdles, including financial constraints, budget reductions, increasing interest rates, and inflation in 2024.

To navigate these obstacles, the Shared Work Program could offer the support you need. This program presents an opportunity to save labor dollars during challenging times, retain employees in a tight labor market, increase flexibility while providing critical services, and position for the long-term. Call (518) 549-0480 for more information or visit https://dol.ny.gov/shared-work-program-0?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

Upcoming Voter Registration & Election Deadlines

The U.S. presidential primary takes place on April 2. Early voting starts March 23. The primary election for Congress, State, and Party Positions is June 25. Early voting starts June 15. The last day to change party registration is February 14. If you are registered in one party, and want to vote in a different party's primary, you must change your party registration. The last day to register to vote is March 23 for the presidential primary, and June 15 for the local primary. Visit <https://vote.nyc/page/register-vote> to register to change party affiliation.

Regional Transportation Plan

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), which covers New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley, wants your input to help formulate the next Regional Transportation Plan. Every four years, NYMTC staff and member agencies work with stakeholders and members of the public on a Regional Transportation Plan which serves as a blueprint to guide federal investments in transportation.

This includes highways, roads and bridges, streets, rail and bus transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, movement of goods, and transportation for people with disabilities. NYMTC is currently developing Moving Forward 2055, the region's next plan. Join in the collaborative effort to create an efficient, convenient, and sustainable transportation system by taking the survey and sharing your thoughts and ideas! Survey link: https://www.fhstudio-apps.com/nymtc_moving_forward_2055/#/.

U.S. Citizenship Workshops

Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462, will be hosting U.S. Citizenship Workshops on Saturday, Jan. 27, at 10 a.m. and Monday, Jan. 29, at 3.30 p.m. to help adults prepare for the U.S. Citizenship Test.

Rent Freeze Program

Eligible New Yorkers with disabilities and older New Yorkers can stop their rent from increasing with the City's Rent Freeze program. Find out if you're eligible! Call the Mayor's Office for Public Engagement's Rent Freeze Hotline at (929) 252-7242. More information is also available here: <https://nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page>.

RFP Open for Kingsbridge Armory

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

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 closes Saturday, Jan. 27, 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 for more information.

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.citizen-snyc.org.

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Setting Goals for 2024 is as Easy as ABC

By **CLAIRE GARON**

Happy New Year and best wishes for a healthy, hopeful winter! In my job as a senior health educator at Montefiore outpatient clinics, I help patients make health goals. The new year is a perfect time to try new habits and behaviors. Today, we are going to use a method I call “Goal ABCs” to make a small goal with a big impact. Please grab a paper, or an electronic device, to take notes.

Goal ABCs

A is for “Action.” First, choose an action you want to try this week or just one day this week. Pick something you can do in the next seven days or sooner. For example, if you are setting a healthy eating goal, you can start by saying; “I

will eat two cups of vegetables with my dinner *each day this week.*” Or, if you are aiming for an exercise goal, you could say “I will ride my exercise bike at home *on Wednesday.*”

B is for “Be Specific.” Now, let’s choose the day and time you will do your action. Think about other actions you’ll need to do before the main action. So, if you chose a healthy eating goal, what specific foods will you need to buy and when? For your goal of eating two cups of vegetables with dinner each day this week, you will need to plan out when to buy the salad greens and dressing and for the exercise goal, pick the specific time you’ll start and the duration of time you’ll engage in the activity, like this:

A: I will ride my exercise bike at home *on Wednesday.*

B: I will ride my bike for 15 minutes on Wednesday. I’ll start at 2 p.m.

C is for “Calendar and Cues.” Take the notes you’ve written and mark them on your personal calendar. Do you use

your phone’s calendar, a wall calendar, or a planner? A piece of paper works too! You are more likely to do the activity if you write it down. This is a small, but important way to commit to your goal. You can also set an alarm or several alarms on your phone as a loud reminder! So, the example goals would look like this:

Healthy Eating

A: I will eat two cups of vegetables with my dinner *each day this week.*

B: I will buy salad greens and dressing tomorrow and add two cups of salad to my dinner each day this week.

C: I wrote “buy salad” on my phone calendar for tomorrow and “eat salad” every day this week at 6 pm, my normal dinner time.

Exercise

A: I will ride my exercise bike at home on Wednesday.

B: I will ride my bike for 15 minutes on Wednesday. I’ll start at 2pm.

C: I wrote “ride bike for 15 minutes” on my wall calendar on Wednesday at

2pm. I also set a phone alarm labeled “ride bike soon” for Wednesday at 1:30 pm.

Focus on what you want to do this week (or just one or two days) and choose your ABC details (Activities, Be specific, Calendar and Cues). Practicing new healthy behaviors takes time and intention. It is helpful to write down the steps and set reminders so we can get into the habit of these actions, until they become second nature.

Making changes can be difficult, but we are here to help! To learn more about healthy eating and exercise, ask your primary doctor to make an appointment with a health educator, or registered dietitian. We also have great programs and treatments for people who are having a hard time with cigarettes and alcohol and other drugs. We are here to support you and help you to reach your health goals.

Claire Garon, MPH, CHES, is a senior health educator in the Office of Community & Population Health at Montefiore Health System.

Brokenhearted Mom Speaks on Son’s Fatal Shooting Amid DV Incident

By **DAVID GREENE**

Six days after a domestic violence incident involving her son during which police officers acted to save a mother’s life, and in the process fatally shot her son, the victim’s heartbroken mother spoke briefly to *Norwood News* about the tragedy.

“Clary,” the mother of fatal gunshot victim, Michael Dotel, 30, who, as reported, was fatally shot on Saturday, Dec. 23, spoke to us briefly as she exited 2865 Creston Avenue in Bedford Park, where the incident transpired.

The grieving mother’s right eye was seen bruised and black, and the area underneath her left eye was also black. Clary, 45, was asked if, in her opinion, she felt the police had handled the situation correctly. She replied simply, “No.”

She went on to say that she had sought help for her son two weeks earlier, recalling, “I tried to ask for help in the hospital for mental... he was so depressed before, yes. They didn’t help me. I took him for observation. They didn’t do anything at St. Barnabas Hospital.”

Asked if there was a GoFundMe page set up to help with expenses, Clary replied, “I need someone to help me make one. I need help with that.” Another family member added that the family hoped to create one to help with Dotel’s burial expenses, as



Photo by David Greene

A PHOTO OF the late Michael Dotel, 30, a father of two, accompanied by a message written by his sister, is seen at the site of a memorial erected outside the family’s home at 2865 Creston Avenue on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023

members of the media and some of the information shared “was not correct.”

Clary was asked about a photo which had been placed above a memorial for her son, surrounded by candles outside the building. Clary sadly replied, “That’s my son. That was him, before.”

A message affixed below the photo, which we were informed had been written by Dotel’s sister, read, “To the first love of my life, I can’t believe I’m sitting here writing this.” It continued, “It pains me that you are no longer with us.” Asked what had been troubling Dotel before his

death, his mother replied, “He was depressed, and he had a lot of problems.” She added, “It’s very sad.”

NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell had said during a press conference held after the incident, “The cops entered the apartment. They observed in a very small, confined space, a subject holding his mother in a front headlock, with a large carving knife to her throat. She was clearly injured and bleeding from that area.”

Chell added, “Our officers gave numerous commands to drop the knife. However, our officer discharged his firearm, striking the subject once in the head, and saved the mother’s life. He was rendered aid; he was removed to hospital where he has since been pronounced [deceased].”

Norwood News contacted St. Barnabas Hospital for comment on Clary’s allegation that her family had attempted to seek help for her son’s mental health problems. We did not receive an immediate response.

Local services for those affected by domestic or gender-based violence are available in The Bronx. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic or gender-based violence, call 311 and ask to be connected to a NYC Family Justice Center or walk-in Monday to Friday, 9

a.m. to 5 p.m.

Call the NYC 24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline on 1-800-621-4673, or visit the [NYC Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence](#) for more information. If you are in immedi-

ate danger, if you can, dial 911.

Help is also available to those living with a mental illness. Call NYC Well at 888-NYC-Well, text “Well” to 65173, or visit [nyc.gov/nycwell](#).



Photo by David Greene

A MEMORIAL OF flowers, candles, and a photo is seen outside 2865 Creston Avenue in Bedford Park in memory of Michael Dotel, 30, on Friday, December 29, 2023.



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Public and Community Meetings

The next 52nd **PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, Jan. 25, at 7 p.m. at the Plaza Rehab and Nursing Center, 100 West Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10468. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7)** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, at 6.30 p.m. at Monroe College, 2501 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468. Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board meeting will be held in February 2024 (date tbc). Contact BX08@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The next **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meeting will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, 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.

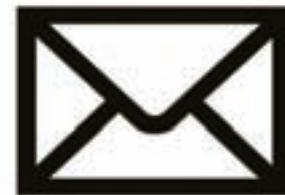


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Letters should be 400 words max, and include the author's name.
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Remembering Kashmir

(continued from page 1)

Sheridan. Her daughter was seen taking in the crowd, the shrine, and holding a helium balloon. Nicole said the two were born about 10 days apart.

Asked if Nikyah understood what had happened, Nicole said she did not. Asked if she was ok, she said, "She's not ok." She added, "The teacher called me, I think it was a Friday morning and told me there was a house fire here on Barnes Avenue."

Referring to Kashmir, Nicole said she had known him for about four months, adding, "She [Nikyah] was very close to him. I'd see him when I'd pick her up at school every day. I would see him walking past us. I would walk over here like every day. I'm right across the street and I would look at Kashmir's house, and I will miss that."

Nicole added, in part, "The mother would always take him to school and bring him back home every day. I would see his mother every day."

We also spoke to Kashmir's art teacher who said, "His P.S. 21 family is here. It's right around the corner." Asked if Kashmir had just started school last September, she said "yes." She went on to describe Kashmir, saying, "Sweet kid. Loved to learn. Loved him." Asked if he had an artistic flair, his teacher said, "Yeah, he loved to draw. It was his way." She paused before saying, "He was very unique in how he drew and decorated his artwork." In a whisper, she then concluded her thoughts, overcome with emotion and unable to continue.

Later, one of the assistant teachers at Kashmir's school described the little boy as a "nice, pleasant kid." Later, we also spoke with the little boy's mom, Keyion Gonzalez-Marquis, who, at times appeared incredibly stoic and at others, distraught, her cries piercing every

heart. She explained how the only reason she was able to talk about Kashmir was because she was still in a daze, adding that she was still expecting him to come back to her.

"He was my reason, my purpose," she said, adding that Kashmir was her only child. "I waited for my son. I did everything I wanted to do before I had him, because I thought all I wanted to be was someone's mother and when I found out I was having a boy, that just made it all the more special."

Asked about the thought process behind choosing Kashmir's name, Gonzalez-Marquis said, "My mom and my sister actually named him. They wanted to name him Cash, and then I wanted it to be with some significance, so I looked up a prince in India and that's how I spelt it that way."

Asked if Kashmir had been enjoying school, his mom said, "Kashmir loved school. Sonic [the Hedgehog] this year, surprisingly. He loved Mickey Mouse for about four years." She then added, "I'm still waiting for my son to wake up and tell me, 'Mommy, I'm okay. Mommy, I love you. Mommy, I'm fine.' Something... ask me for something so I'm gonna do something, so I'm gonna do *anything*, because anything he wanted, I did for my son."

We asked if she had some favorite memories of her son. She said, "My son loved to sing. I really thought he was gonna be either a producer...someone to make music. He was very energetic. Kashmir loved to dance. He was the life of everything. You could *not not* love my son. He was a good dancer, a good singer. His voice was great."

She continued, "My son barely cried. My son was a happy baby. My son knew no pain." Asked if he made friends easily, Gonzalez-Marquis said, "Kashmir, you would want to adopt him! Before he



Photo by Síle Moloney

FRIENDS, FAMILY, TEACHERS, and neighbors of the late Kashmir Marquis, 5, who died tragically on Jan. 3, 2024, following a basement fire in Wakefield, release balloons outside his Barnes Avenue home during a memorial event held on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024.

even... his smile attracted you to him. Everything about that kid was just.... if you didn't like *me*, you loved my son! How could you not? My sweet baby. I'm still waiting to wake up."

When we mentioned that other residents talked about how they recognized him on the block, she said he was the neighborhood baby. Asked if she was getting any counseling to help with her grief, she said, "Right now, I'm just here day by day, minute by minute, second by second but again, I see all my coworkers. Everybody's here. [I'm] still wondering why but I appreciate it and I love it. I love all the support that I'm getting."

She continued, "I have my UPS family, my immediate family, my friends, associates, friends, our friends, the neighborhood. This is my neighborhood. I've lived here all my life. This is our house, my elementary school, everything."

FDNY officials said they received a call at 5.20 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 3, for a report of a fire in the basement of a private dwelling located at 4011 Barnes Avenue, between East 227th Street and East 226 Street. An FDNY spokesperson said 12 units, comprising 60 firefighters, responded to the blaze and that four civilians were injured, one in critical condition and three with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

All were transported to area hospitals according to the FDNY and no further update on the victims' condition or description was provided. FDNY officials said the fire was brought under control at 6.12 p.m. and fire marshals are investigating the cause. Police later identified Kashmir as a fatal victim of the incident.

Police said officers had also responded to a 911 call regarding the fire. They said Kashmir had been transported by EMS to New York Health and Hospitals/Jacobi where he was pronounced deceased. They described two of the other victims as an 83-year-old woman and a 26-year-old woman, who were also transported by EMS to New York Health and Hospitals/Jacobi in stable condition for smoke inhalation.

Norwood News later spoke to Kash-

mir's aunt. Asked if there was anything she wanted people to know about the incident, she said, "I tried to save them." Asked if she knew how the fire started, she said, "No." We asked if she, herself, lived in the building and she replied, "Yes." Asked if she was now displaced, she said she was.

A GoFundMe page was launched by Camile Santiago in the wake of the tragedy. "Help us support our friend and loved one, Keyion, and her family through this unfortunate time," the accompanying message read. "This fundraiser is to help a friend and their family in need during a difficult time in their life. The funds will help with the funeral costs and repairs for their home."

The fire was one of several across the north Bronx in recent weeks. On Dec. 13, 2023, a 5-alarm fire ripped through several small businesses in Kingsbridge, resulting in one minor injury. Later, a three-alarm fire on Dec. 18, 2023, gutted a Kingsbridge Heights deli, caused by lithium-ion batteries, FDNY officials said.

A Christmas Day residential fire in Kingsbridge resulted in no injuries, while a fire that broke out on Dec. 26, 2023, at 3060 Hull Avenue in Norwood resulted in one minor injury. Four fires broke out across Kingsbridge Heights and Bedford Park within a 12-hour period, starting Friday, Dec. 29, 2023.

As reported, the commercial fire which destroyed several commercial businesses on Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood on Oct. 10, 2023, was the result of arson, according to the NYPD.

Back in Wakefield, asked if there was anything else she wanted to say, Gonzalez-Marquis said, "I just want to tell everyone, 'Hold your son or hold your kids a little tighter tonight.'" Referring to her son and home life, she said, "This is my everything; everything in me was for my son."

Visit www.FDNYSmart.org for fire safety recommendations. Those wishing to donate can visit www.gofundme.org and search for "Kashmir Marquis." Visit www.norwoodnews.org for more details about the other referenced fires.



Photo by Síle Moloney

KEYION GONZALEZ-MARQUIS, MOTHER of the late Kashmir Marquis, 5, who died on Jan. 3, 2024, following a basement fire in Wakefield, is comforted by friends and family as she reflects at a shrine dedicated to her son outside their Barnes Avenue home during a memorial event held on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024.

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