



# NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo courtesy of Lori Adams

**IN RECOGNITION OF** National Wear Red Day, and to kick off American Heart Month in February, cardiology specialists, medical teams, and administrators at Montefiore Medical Center in Norwood, dressed in red and gathered for an event at Montefiore's Moses campus on Friday, Feb. 2, to raise awareness about heart disease prevention.

By **ARIEL PACHECO & SILE MOLONEY**

Heart disease is preventable, yet it is the leading cause of death in the United States according to the National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute (NHLBI) with more

than 800,000 people dying of cardiovascular disease every year. Despite this, a recent poll conducted by Harris and the American Heart Association found that more than half of U.S. residents are unaware of these facts.

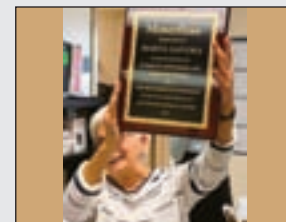
In recognition of National Wear Red Day, and to kick off American Heart Month in February, cardiology specialists, medical teams, and administrators at Montefiore Health System, dressed in red and gathered at its 210<sup>th</sup> Street

Moses campus in Norwood for an event on Friday, Feb. 2, to raise awareness and share information about the signs and symptoms of, and treatments for, heart disease.

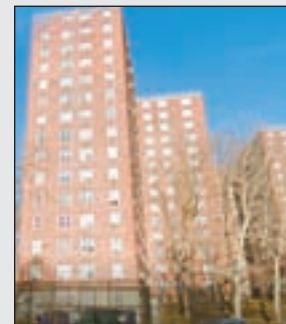
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## Vol. 37, No. 3

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# Family & Friends Remember Cecilia “Ceci” Greene

By DAVID GREENE

The Amalgamated Houses and the larger Jerome Park community is mourning the recent death of Cecilia “Ceci” Greene at the age of 91. Friends have offered an outpouring of tributes to the German immigrant who grew up during and survived the Nazi occupation only to seek and find lifelong friends and a better life in America. Greene died on Jan. 23.

Ray Pultinas, founder and director of the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center (JBOLC) and Meg’s Garden, both located on the campus of Sedgwick Avenue’s DeWitt Clinton High School, paid tribute to Greene in an online post. Pultinas described her as a “garden supporter,” a “spirited dancer at our events,” as well as a “singer in the community choir.”

Pultinas later told *Norwood News*, “She frequented the market, hung out with the other elders, and was delighted by all the children.” He went on to say, “For being in her 90s, she certainly had spark! She shared some of her background with me, and I came to know that she truly lived through some of the worst times as a survivor of the Second World War.”

Pultinas continued, “Her city of Dresden, Germany was destroyed but she survived, and eventually landed in America. But despite the trauma that she witnessed as a 10-year-old girl, she overcame and had a real zest for life. We miss her dearly.”

Another friend, Jay Hauben, recalled Greene, telling *Norwood News*, “Besides the many battles at Amalgamated, Cecile, Ronda and I attended many rallies and protest demonstrations. Cecile was a solid progressive fighter against war and for social justice.”

Cheryl Warfield, director of the MORE Opera Community Chorus, of which Greene was a member since its inception in 2018, said of her late friend, “She was no nonsense, and she was very active in a lot of things. If it was something that resonated with her, she was all in!”

Warfield recalled losing touch with Greene during the COVID pandemic, but said that when in-person gatherings



Photo courtesy of JBOLC  
**AN UNDATED PHOTO** of Cecilia “Ceci” Greene who died on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, aged 91 with friends.



Photo courtesy of JBOLC

**AN UNDATED PHOTO** shows the late Cecilia Greene protesting the closure of Meg’s Garden, located on Sedgwick Avenue in Bedford Park. The garden was later re-opened.

returned, the group performed before thousands of people at the San Gennaro Festival in Manhattan’s Little Italy in the fall of 2022.

According to Greene’s son, Malcolm, she was born in Dresden, Germany in January 1933 at the start of the Hitler regime. Her father was a Catholic German, and her mother was French.

Malcolm said that as a child, Greene and her schoolmates protested the Nazis by going deep into the woods and shouting “WE HATE HITLER!” He said when she was 12 years old, she survived the bombing of Dresden by British and American forces, a bombing that would claim the life of her mother.

Greene went on to say that after the war his mother was reunited with her father and another sister and the three came to New York City in 1953. Years later, Greene and her own three children moved into the Amalgamated Housing Cooperative in the early 1990s which, Malcolm said “were some of the best years of her life.”

Greene added, “From anti-war movements, to supporting the striking Stella D’oro cookie workers, to her support of the Palestinian people in their fight to return [to] their homeland, she was always on the right side, the side of working people. She had grown up in a world

of fascist dictators and was adamant about speaking truth to power wherever and however that fascism showed its face.”

Greene said that according to the autopsy report, his mother suffered a “cardiac event.” Members of the MORE Opera Community Chorus will be hosting a Black History Month concert on Thursday, Feb. 15, at 2 p.m. which will feature a musical performance, poetry reading, and a tribute to Greene at Vladeck Hall, located at 78 Van Cortlandt Park South.



Photo courtesy of JBOLC

**AN UNDATED PHOTO** of Cecilia “Ceci” Greene who died on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, aged 91, with a friend.

## New Law Clarifies Disclosure of Credit Card Surcharges

By SILE MOLONEY

New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Feb. 6 a new consumer protection law that will go into effect on Feb. 11. The new law will amend and clarify New York’s existing credit card surcharge law, the governor said. The NYS Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) assists aggrieved consumers in the marketplace and the New York State Attorney General and local governments have the authority to enforce the credit card surcharge law.

DCP officials are recommending that interested localities review DCP’s Credit Card Surcharge Legal Update Letter for more information. Hochul said business transactions imposing a credit card surcharge must post the total price of transactions, including any surcharge, prior to sale. Learn more here: <https://dos.ny.gov/business-resources>.



# Citywide Scooter Bandit Network Busted!

By DAVID GREENE

Hours after an early morning raid on Monday, Feb. 5, on an apartment at NYCHA Parkside Housing Project in Allerton, New York City Mayor Eric Adams and Police Commissioner Edward Caban announced that nine people have been charged in the context of an elaborate cellphone robbery pattern with international criminal links.

Police said the nine people were charged with 62 robberies spanning all City boroughs, except Staten Island. They said many of the robberies were orchestrated iPhone hit jobs carried out on scooters, and that the alleged ringleader was Victor Parra, 30, of Venezuela who lived at Parkside Housing Project, located between White Plains Road and Bronx Park East.

The mayor and police commissioner stressed that although at least five of the men charged were migrants, they did not represent most migrants entering New York City. "In recent months, a wave of migrant crime has washed over our city, but by no means do the individuals committing these crimes represent the vast number of people coming to New York to build a better life," Caban said.

Soon after the raid was carried out on Monday morning, NYPD Assistant Police Commissioner Kaz Daughtry posted on X, formerly Twitter, "Most migrants come to NYC in search of a better life. Sadly, some come to commit crimes." He went on



Photo by David Greene

**A PAIR OF** plain clothes officers and a pair of uniformed officers apparently stop a scooter rider at the intersection of Sedgwick Avenue and Hillman Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023. When contacted, the NYPD press office said they had no information on the stop based on the information we provided to them.

to say that while the rest of the city was sleeping, the mayor joined NYPD investigators & specialized teams in The Bronx as they executed the arrest warrant and carried out the surprise early morning Allerton raid.

"Today, we made tremendous progress in the largest robbery pattern plaguing our city," Daughtry said. "Our message is

simple - commit a crime in our city and we will find you and bring you to justice!"

Later that day, at a joint press conference held at NYPD headquarters at One Police Plaza, Adams told reporters he attended the 5.30 a.m. Bronx raid, "because I'm the general, and generals lead from the front." He continued, "From the onset, we want to be extremely clear. It doesn't

matter if a person is a migrant, asylum seeker, or if the person is a long-term New Yorker. You break the law, it will be investigated, and it will be handled by our criminal justice system."

The mayor went on to say that the NYPD's job was apprehensions. "The prosecutor has a job to prosecute, and the federal government has a job to determine if a person is here as a migrant / asylum seeker." Adams said those found guilty of crimes should do their time and, if undocumented, be deported.

In recent months, the NYPD's 50<sup>th</sup> Precinct had been warning residents of a "robbery pattern" in and around Van Cortlandt Park. Cops had recommended walking in pairs and being aware of one's surroundings. *Norwood News* had reported on several Bronx iPhone robberies carried out by scooter riders over the last year. Police said over half of the 62 robberies linked to the scam were carried out in Manhattan.

Adams said these 62 likely occurred on the transit system, using mopeds, scooters, and by snatching property like iPhones and wallets. The mayor warned, "The law is coming for those who use mopeds illegally," and noted that the NYPD confiscated over 2,500 illegal mopeds and scooters in 2023, an increase of 74% from 2022.

Pointing to the similarities between so-called "ghost cars," where fake plates

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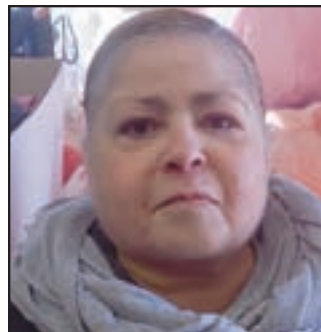


# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



With the recent passage by the City Council of the “How Many Stops Act,” its subsequent veto by New York City Mayor Eric Adams and the veto override by three-quarters of the New York City Council, we asked readers their opinion on the new law which requires police officers to make a report for each individual stop of a member of the public.



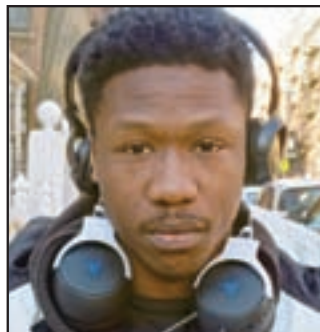
“Yes, more transparency is better because if they are stopping people, they should do the paperwork behind it. They [the police] are not better than anyone else. We should know why they stop someone. Our problem is for them [the police] to be transparent.”

**Millie Lozada,**  
Parkchester  
(Photo by David Greene)



“I think it's a good thing. Although the mayor vetoed it, I think it should be passed, so the police can be held more accountable as to what's going on. Personally, I don't see how it's going to take away from their duties. I don't think it would be a lot of paperwork.”

**David Porter,**  
Parkchester resident visiting Westchester Square  
(Photo by David Greene)



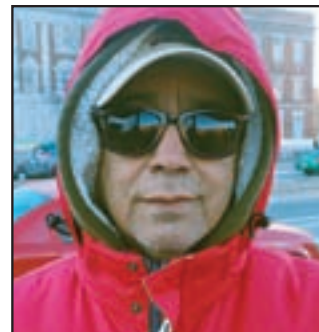
“I do believe the police should make a report every time they stop someone because it will hold police accountable for their actions. If the police don't make a report every time they stop someone, anything can happen within that given time. They might not like the paperwork, but it's the only way of holding the police accountable for their actions. I don't feel that the cameras are enough, I don't feel that the media is enough, and I feel that this is just one more step towards the right goal.”

**Malik Debow,**  
Fordham Manor  
(Photo by David Greene)



“In regard to people being stopped (by police) and having a report made every single time, I don't believe that that's a worthwhile endeavor. The police need to do their job and to stop all the rapes, murders, muggings, robberies and all the other crime that's happening in New York City. So, we need to have the police focus on doing their jobs and not doing unnecessary paperwork. If citizens want to make a report of unfair police actions, they can make that report, but taking time away from cops doing their jobs and making the streets safer is asinine. Everyone deserves to feel safe and not have overworked police.”

**Nicholas Comerford,**  
Morrisania resident visiting Kingsbridge  
(Photo by David Greene)



“I think it's a waste of time, because the police don't have time to ask for information every time they stop somebody and have to get a lot of information. I don't think it would work. In their business, they're busy. There's a lot of things going on in the city and there is a lot of crime. They need that extra time, and they need more funding, more money.”

**Rodolpho Rodriguez,**  
Kingsbridge  
(Photo by David Greene)

*Editor's Note: Some City Council members allege that most of the reports in question are already made available internally to the NYPD and the law is more about making that information public. Norwood News contacted the NYPD for comment on the topic. We will share any updates we receive.*

## City of Yes Program Met with Concern at CB8 Meeting

By ARIEL PACHECO

Mayor Eric Adams' “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” program faced major opposition and concerns from community members during Bronx Community Board 8 (CB8)'s Land Use & Economic Development committee meeting on Jan. 4.

According to the Adams administration, the “City of Yes” program comprises three strands, instigated by the mayor in efforts to boost small businesses, create more affordable housing, and promote sustainability.

The “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” initiative is part of the first strand and aims to create more flexible zoning regulations for small businesses. Discussion during the meeting raised numerous concerns from board members and the public alike.

“I have questions, not opposition, questions,” said committee chair, Charles Moerdler. “There's no question in my mind that it's a damn good idea to update use rules as to what you can use property for, make it possible for busi-

nesses to open up in neighborhoods with similar zoning.” He added, in part, “I'm not sure that the proposals that have been advanced *do* that in any significant way that is positive or negative.”

The “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” initiative consists of 18 changes that include enabling commercial activity on upper floors of buildings, and simplifying rules on the types of businesses that can be located on commercial streets. Some residents raised concerns that developers would use the changes to take advantage of the community.

Local resident Efrain Gonzalez said, “I just don't see it working and I think this is just a way for developers to come in and get what they want, and then the communities all over The Bronx are going to suffer because it's not going to be community-based, and that's the big, troubling thing that I see. One size does not fit all.”

For his part, a fellow resident, Robert Fanuzzi, said, “I see this as, absent the documentation of a real economic need and opportunity, as a cookie cutter approach that will change neighborhood character in search of something called flexibility, and flexibility by the way, is not a job.”

The committee agreed to table the vote on the program at CB8's full board meeting, which took place on Jan. 9. The full board later voted to reject the proposed changes, citing concerns with “noise, traffic, sanitation and general



Screenshot courtesy of Bronx Community Board 8 via YouTube

**BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** Land Use & Economic Development committee last met on Monday, Feb. 5, 2024.

health, welfare and safety of residents.”

Additionally, during the committee meeting, the committee listened to a special building permit renewal application relating to the Hebrew Home for the Aged, located at 5901 Palisade Avenue in North Riverdale. The committee heard that the permit was originally granted in 2018.

Some proposed changes to the permit were presented, including the removal of the GoldFine building to accommodate new independent living units, and a new site layout that will allow for two rows of vehicles, while still maintaining adequate traffic circulation through the north entrance. No decision was taken by the committee finally during the meeting on the special permit renewal.

There was also a discussion over the removal of tennis courts on the grounds of the home in favor of the installation of pickleball courts. Some residents shared concerns over the possible noise this would, in their opinion, emit. Sound experts estimate pickleball to be in the 70 decibel range and about twice as noisy as tennis.

Anne Shamoon, another local resident, said, “More noise from pickleball, lights on the pickleball court; all of that would be a real diminishment of this neighborhood and that's what we're concerned about.”

An update was also provided on the construction of an 18-story apartment development at 3745 Riverdale Avenue

(continued on page 11)



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# 'Sherlock Holmes' of Microbiology Retires After 54 Years

By MONTEFIORE STAFF &  
SÍLE MOLONEY

When Marta Gavora immigrated to the United States from communist Czechoslovakia with her younger sister in 1969, she was just 23 years old and spoke no English. While helping to organize the Dermatological Symposium held in Bratislava in then-Czechoslovakia, in 1966, she came across a scientific paper presented by a Montefiore physician.

Soon after her arrival in New York, she took a chance and contacted the doctor who later helped her land a position at Norwood's Montefiore Medical Center, as a clinical laboratory technician in the microbiology lab. Last month, after 54 years on the job, the Queens and former Bronx resident reluctantly retired.

On Jan. 4, her lab colleagues threw her a party and presented her with a plaque. They recently spoke to Gavora about her incredible journey from the former Eastern Bloc, as well as her long, stellar career at the private hospital, which is also the academic medical center and university hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

According to the Microbiology Society, microbiology is the study of all living organisms that are too small to be visible with the naked eye, collectively known as microbes. The job involves laboratory testing.

Gavora said when she first joined Montefiore, it preceded automation, when the processing of specimens was much slower and required more background knowledge about microbiology than what is needed today. "It was like being Sherlock Holmes, piecing together clues to solve medical mysteries," Gavora, now 77, recalled of her early days.

Over the years, Gavora mastered English and earned a degree to become a certified laboratory technician. In her 54-year career at Montefiore, she and her co-workers have identified countless microorganisms that have helped physicians diagnose infectious diseases. She has also mentored many interns and trainees and formed lasting friendships.

Philip Gialanella, MS, assistant director of the microbiology lab and Gavora's supervisor, has worked with her for 42 years. He describes her as a pioneer who has significantly impacted the microbiology lab. "Marta is very conscientious and patient-oriented and wants to work on specimens as soon as possible and give accurate results," he said. "Through the years, she has done a great job teaching residents, fellows, and other interns and students that come through the lab."

Gavora was born in 1946, right after World War II. "My family lived in a village where my father was a manager of a farm," she said. "After graduating from vocational school for industrial chemistry, I got a job in a mycology research laboratory in a hospital."

She said that in 1968, her homeland experienced significant changes. After



Photo courtesy of Viera Novak

**MICROBIOLOGIST, MARTA GAVORA**, is seen at work at Montefiore Medical Center, Norwood, The Bronx, in the early days of her career.



Photo courtesy of Viera Novak

**MICROBIOLOGIST, MARTA GAVORA**, with her sister, Viera Novak, as young children in the former Czechoslovakia.

a period of reform and relaxed rule, she said incoming Soviet and allied armies brought repression, persecution, and strict limits to personal freedoms.

"After the invasion, my sister and I decided to leave the country, but my parents wanted to stay behind. As refugees,

we had to wait in Austria and Italy for the necessary immigration papers and arrived in the United States in the spring of 1969," she said. "We got an apartment in The Bronx for about \$84 a month."

Her prior lack of English worried her but she said the Montefiore lab direc-

tor who hired her said no one needed to know that and offered her a chance to train for three months without pay. "After that, I earned a training license in microbiology and later pursued a bachelor's degree in biology," she said.

"I learned to speak English and microbiology on the job. My journey to Montefiore resulted from persistence, support from refugee organizations, and my determination to excel in microbiology, despite the language barrier and initial challenges I faced."

Gavora said what she has enjoyed most about her career has been working with a diverse group of colleagues and medical professionals. "I love the detective-like aspect of the microbiology, of identifying and understanding various microorganisms, and determining antibiotic responses," she said. "I also enjoyed teaching the residents, infectious disease fellows, and newly hired co-workers."

Referring to the advances in automation and science over the years, she said, "I found it very intellectually stimulating. Working with tuberculosis was like watching the grass grow. It could take four to eight weeks to grow in culture and then longer to identify. Now, PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests can detect it much faster, giving doctors the ability to treat patients sooner."

Asked about the most exciting case she had seen during her 54-year career, she said, "*Brucella melitensis* was an organism that took us by surprise. The bacteria comes from eating or drinking unpasteurized, raw, dairy products from infected sheep, goats, cows, or camels. We had never seen it, didn't know which way to go, and needed tools to identify it. We had to send the specimens to the CDC for identification."

She said inhaling the bacteria could cause infection, so working with the bacteria required taking great precaution. "We all had to take two antibiotics for three weeks as preventative treatment," Gavora said.

"Some of us thought the combination of antibiotics changed our metabolism. For two weeks, I had a craving for fried chicken, and some people craved bacon. It was a significant learning experience for our team that highlighted the importance of continuously expanding our knowledge in microbiology."

Asked about the most challenging part of her job, Gavora said, "Dealing with infectious diseases and pandemics like COVID-19 has been a challenge. We've had to adapt to changing circumstances and rapidly identify new pathogens. It's critical work but it can be emotionally draining, especially during a pandemic when lives are at stake."

When asked what words of wisdom or advice she would offer individuals considering a career in microbiology, Gavora said, "Follow your passion. It will be a fulfilling career if you genuinely enjoy the work and find it intellectually stimulating."

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# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## Morris Park Artist Wins Ice Sculpture Contest

Morris Park artist, Lovie Pignata won the Governor's Island 2024 Ice Sculpture Live Show on Saturday, Feb. 3. Pignata's ice sculpture is called "Smitten" and depicts two hands making a heart-shaped symbol. It will be recreated in Times Square for Valentine's Day. Morris Park Business Improvement District (BID) wrote, "Congratulations Lovie!" after Pignata's win was announced. The BID thanked Okamoto Studio and Times Square Arts for what they called a unique event.



Photo courtesy of the Morris Park Business Improvement District.

**LOVIE PIGNATA HOLDS** a photo of her winning ice sculpture "Smitten" at the Governor's Island 2024 Ice Sculpture Live Show on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024.

## New Nursing Wing Opens at Lehman College

Lehman College opened their Nursing, Education and Research Center on Feb. 1. The official opening was held in the presence of multiple Bronx elected officials. Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson said, "This new center will give students hands-on experience and pathways to future opportunities as they pursue a career in the medical industry."



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Bronx Borough President

**OFFICIALS AT LEHMAN** College are joined by Bronx elected officials and nursing students for the official opening of its new nursing, education, and research center on Feb. 1, 2024.

## Feliz Presents \$6M Check to M.S. 45 for Playground Renovation

On Thursday Feb. 1, City Council Member Oswald Feliz (C.D. 15) joined educators and students of M.S. 45 Thomas C. Giordano Middle School 45 in Belmont to announce a \$6 million renovation to the school's large playground. The councilman said the funds will be used to convert the playground into a new and modern sports facility, with synthetic turf fields for baseball, football, soccer, and more. The new facility will also include new handball courts, as well as a running track. Construction is expected to start in the next few months, will be finalized by February 2025, and the renovations were funded through the 2022 and 2023 city budget.

"Sports facilities provide students with the opportunity to learn new sports, stay healthy, and come together with the community. This schoolyard has so much potential but was ignored for so long. I am proud that it will fi-

nally be transformed into the sports facility that our students and community deserve," said Feliz.



Photo courtesy of Rep. Oswald Feliz  
**COUNCILMAN OSWALD FELIZ** presents a check for \$6 million to M.S. 45 on Feb. 1, 2024, to renovate the school's playground.

## BOEDC Offers Grant Opportunity to Small Businesses

Applications are open with the Bronx Overall Economic Development

Corporation (BOEDC) its BX-Factor grants, specifically designed to support promising local businesses that have faced challenges in securing necessary funding for growth and sustainability. BOEDC official said the BX-Factor is about more than just financial assistance. It's a competition that will showcase the entrepreneurial spirit of The Bronx. The top five applicants will be invited to participate in a pitch competition during Bronx Week for a chance to win a \$10,000 cash prize.

They said the competition is not only about the monetary reward but also an opportunity to present innovative business ideas and gain exposure. The selection process will focus on how well applicants propose to utilize the award to benefit their business and, in turn, the local community. The deadline to apply for the grant is March 15 and finalists will be notified by April 15. To apply, visit <https://www.bxedc.org/bx-factor>.

# North Central Bronx Hospital Unveils New Employee Wellness Room

By ARIEL PACHECO

NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx (NCB) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Jan. 24 as the public hospital unveiled a brand-new, employee wellness room. Jeremy Segall, assistant vice president of human experience at NYC Health + Hospitals said of the occasion, "The opening of the workforce wellness room is a pivotal moment for permanence of well-being across our system, to have a workforce wellness room where people can come to take time to connect with their own concrete needs."

NCB representatives said the new staff wellness room is designed to create a space where employees can take a break and rejuvenate. Segall said the room was also to ensure that employees were, figuratively speaking, filling their cups up so that they could, in turn, fill up the cups of others.

Inside the room, the walls are painted a calming dark blue and it has comfortable seating spread throughout. On one wall is a chart depicting the "8 Dimensions of Wellness." It reads, "Wellness is defined as an active pursuit of new life skills and becoming aware of, and making conscious choices towards, a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. There are eight dimensions that contribute to a more successful existence."

According to the chart, the eight dimensions include environmental, spiritual, occupational, financial, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. "We're always saying you must take care of yourself to be able to take care of other people," Segall reiterated.

He added that healthcare workers



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

**(L TO R, front row)** JEREMY SEGALL, ASSISTANT vice president of human experience at NYC Health and Hospitals; Alisha Bronne, NCB patient experience officer; (l to r, back row) Joanne Sampson, chief human resources officer NYC Health + Hospitals; Julie Torres Moskovitz, architect; Katherine Hui, designer; Christopher Mastromano, CEO of NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi and North Central Bronx Hospitals, and Alfredo Jones, NCB deputy executive director, attend the opening of a new wellness center at North Central Bronx Hospital in Norwood, The Bronx on Jan. 24, 2024.

across the country have been leaving the workforce at large since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to research conducted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), 100,000 nurses left the workforce during the pandemic.

"People are leaving due to feelings of stress and burnouts and day-to-day demands weighing on them personally and professionally," said Segall.

Just last year, as reported at the time, NCB hospital employees were given a larger parking lot and a shuttle bus service to and from the lot, after staff expressed safety concerns about

getting to and from their parked vehicles.

Segall continued, "Today's wellness room is a pivotal moment to say you are just as valued as our patient populations, that we [would] not be able to provide the high-quality, safe care that we provide to others if we do not take care of you, our employees."

NYC Health + Hospitals has opened numerous other employee wellness centers within its network all across the City in recent years. As reported, this included one at Jacobi Medical Center in Morris Park in August 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



### Male Found Guilty of Brandon Hendricks' Fatal Shooting

The Bronx District Attorney's office said on Monday, Jan. 30, that Najhim Luke, 22, who was previously arrested for the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Brandon Hendricks in June 2020 in Morris Heights, has been found guilty on one count of manslaughter and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon. He is due to be sentenced in March. Brandon was killed in crossfire and was not targeted by Luke.

Meanwhile, officials from Oyate Group, a Bronx-based nonprofit which aims to alleviate poverty and gun violence, said applications are now open for the 2024 Brandon Hendricks Scholarship for two college-bound high school students who will each be awarded \$20,000 over four years to pursue their studies. Apply by March 31 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PY32GTH>.

### Seventy NYCHA Employees Charged with Bribery/Extortion

Federal and City officials said 70 current and former employees of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), including eight from The Bronx, were charged on Feb. 6, with allegedly accepting cash payments from contractors in exchange for awarding NYCHA contracts at various NYCHA locations across the City, in the largest, single-day bribery/extortion case in federal history.

Sixty-six of those charged were arrested on Feb. 6 in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and North Carolina. The following eight Bronxites were among those charged with solicitation and receipt of a bribe (which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years), and extortion under color of official right (which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years):

Hector Colon, 45, Lateisha Harley, 48, Nena Huntley, 36, Henry McPhatter, 44, Jorge Perez, 54, Curtis Priester, 58, Jaime Rivera, 50, and John Rivera, 56.

Among the affected NYCHA complexes located in the north Bronx, according to federal officials, are Gun Hill Houses, Eastchester Gardens, Boston Road Plaza, Pelham Parkway, Twin Parks West, Twin Parks East, and 1010 East 178th Street. They also include Marble Hill. Federal officials said cash payments were accepted on site at these and other NYCHA locations.

As alleged in the complaint, the defendants typically demanded approximately 10% to 20% of the contract [e.g. repairs] value, between \$500 and \$2,000 depending on the size of the contract, but some defendants demanded even higher amounts. In total, these defendants demanded over \$2 million in corrupt payments from contractors in exchange for awarding over \$13 million worth of no-bid contracts. A person arrested and charged with a crime is deemed in-

nocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Anyone who believes they may have information related to bribery, extortion, or any other illegal conduct by NYCHA employees is requested to contact [OIGNYCHA@doj.nyc.gov](mailto:OIGNYCHA@doj.nyc.gov) or (212) 306-3356. Federal officials further suggest that anyone who may have been involved in such conduct consider self-disclosing through the [SDNY Whistleblower Pilot Program](#) at [USANYS.WBP@usdoj.gov](mailto:USANYS.WBP@usdoj.gov).

On Feb. 7, Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), who represents a large section of The Bronx, introduced the Contracting Accountability and Transparency Act, which aims to enhance transparency and accountability within public housing agencies by mandating comprehensive disclosure of contracts entered into by these agencies.

### Coalition Calls to End Statute of Limitations for Human Trafficking Survivors

Coinciding with Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January, Democratic Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), was among a coalition of elected officials, advocates, and human trafficking survivors who joined Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, Jr., on Jan. 18, to call on the New York State legislature to support survivors by eliminating the five-year statute of limitations for sex trafficking and child sex trafficking.

The definition of human trafficking is the practice of exploiting adults and children for use as commodities, or objects, in conditions of sexual and labor servitude, according to the nonprofit Safe Horizon. "Also known as 'modern slavery,' human trafficking is the illegal trade in human beings through recruitment or abduction by means of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of forced labor, debt bondage or sexual exploitation" nonprofit representatives write.

According to the DA's office, trauma, fear, and cultural stigmas frequently lead survivors to delay reporting to law enforcement. They said New York has recognized this issue by eliminating the statutes of limitation for B-felony sexual offenses, including first-degree rape and incest, as well as aggravated sexual abuse, and course of sexual conduct against a child.

They said in 2019, New York extended the period during which survivors of child sexual violence can commence a civil suit. They said the latest human trafficking bill, which they said passed the Senate unanimously in 2023, would provide sex trafficking survivors the same protections as survivors of other B-felony sex offenses by removing the criminal statute of limitations for sex trafficking and sex trafficking of a child.



### Fordham Manor: Man Sought following Afternoon Stabbing

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is wanted for questioning in connection to an assault that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Saturday, Jan. 27, at around 3.45 p.m., a 32-year-old male victim was in the vicinity of 327 East Kingsbridge Road, when the suspect got into a verbal dispute with him and stabbed him once in the abdomen.

Police said the victim was removed by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. They said the suspect is described as male, has a dark complexion and a slim build. They said he was last seen wearing a black and white jacket, an orange, hooded sweatshirt, a black hat, blue jeans, and black sneakers. The location of the stabbing, outside Cee & Cee Department Store on Fordham Road, was also the general vicinity of a serious car crash in 2011, and another in 2021.



### Bedford Park: One Sought for House Burglary

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who police said is sought in connection to a burglary that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at

around 10 p.m., a person entered a residential home located in the vicinity of Bedford Park Boulevard and Bainbridge Avenue by forcing open a window. Once inside, the person stole property with an estimated value of \$1,200 and fled the location on foot, traveling northbound on Bainbridge Avenue. They said no injuries were reported.



### Fordham Manor: Two Sought after Youth Robbed amid Dispute, Shot Fired

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photo above who they say are wanted in connection to an armed robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Monday, Feb. 5, at around 5.10 p.m., in front of 1 West Fordham Road, a 16-year-old male victim and two others got into a verbal dispute. They said the two suspects demanded money from the victim, but the victim refused. They said the two then stole the victim's property.

Police said the victim then followed the two suspects, who then fired a shot(s) at him. They said the suspects fled the location in a red-colored SUV to parts unknown. Police said the first suspect is described as male and has a light complexion. They said he was wearing a dark-colored sweatshirt, dark-colored pants, light-colored sneakers, and a black face mask. They said the second suspect is also described as male, and has a dark complexion. They said he was wearing a dark-colored face mask, a dark-colored skull cap, a dark-colored, hooded sweatshirt, a black and white jacket, and black and red-colored sneakers.

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



**NYC PLANNING | APPLICATION PROCESS**

The process is divided into five steps:

- STEP 1: FIND OUT WHAT'S ALLOWED**
  - How can I use my development/property?
  - 1. Zoning
  - 2. Zoning Incentives
  - 3. Zoning Modifications
  - 4. Zoning Maps (Title 220-22b-0201)
- STEP 2: BEGIN THE APPLICATION PROCESS**
  - Informational Meeting**  
Contact your borough office to schedule an informational meeting to discuss the intent of your project. A planner will direct you to a number of resources to bring to your meeting.
  - Pre-Application Agreement (PAA)**  
The planner will direct you to the pre-application agreement which often provides basic performance information about your proposed project to formally begin the pre-application process.
  - Inter-Departmental Meeting**  
Representatives from key city departments will give you an opportunity to discuss your proposed project with the assigned DCP staff from the various agencies that will be responsible for reviewing your development proposal.
  - DCPDC Memo**  
The Responsive Mixed-Use Development Summary (RMUCS) is a developer framework used to introduce the proposed development project.
- STEP 3: PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND-USE APPLICATIONS**
  - Submit Draft Environmental Features
  - Submit Draft Land Use Application
  - DCP coordinated review and comments
- STEP 4: FILING & PAYING FEES**
  - File Land Use & Environmental Review Applications
  - Pay Fees
  - DCP final review and determination of application completeness
- STEP 5: PUBLIC REVIEW OR AGENCY APPROVAL**
  - Certification/Notice
  - SLURP Process  
To be approved, a majority of applications will have to get through New York City's public Land Use Review Process (SLURP) which includes the public review process.





## Littles Hearts, Big Potential

By NEREYDA FRANCO

It's February once again and with it, the focus returns to all matters of the heart. We'll learn about heart health of kids, because little hearts grow up, and the health and habits of today's young people pave the road for heart health, or heart disease, in adulthood.

Research by Harvard Medical School shows that childhood and adolescent habits really matter. Many of the biggest risks factors for adult heart disease start in the early years: obesity, poor diet, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, limited movement, poor sleep, and smoking/exposure to secondhand smoke.

Heart disease can be caused by conditions that are present from birth. How-

ever, it can also be prevented by reducing or avoiding these risk factors. Sadly, the risks factors of obesity and high blood pressure in young people are higher now than ever before. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that one out of every five children in America are obese and one in 25 people aged 12 to 19 have high blood pressure.

Adults can do many things to prevent heart disease, like modeling healthy behaviors that will improve your health and inspire your loved ones (and young ones!) to do the same. Follow these "protective" practices: follow a healthy diet, don't smoke, get enough sleep, and stay active!

### Create Healthy Eating Patterns

- Protect your heart by limiting sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars.
- Offer young people fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy.
- Avoid over feeding – as a guide for portion size, use the plate method: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/csi/obesity-plate-planner-13.pdf>.
- Avoid junk and fast foods.

- Limit sugary drinks. Instead of juices and sodas, serve water, fruit or vegetable infused water, flavored seltzer, or low-fat milk. If you do serve juice, follow the

### American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations:

- 1 year or younger: no juice at all
- 1 to 3 years: Only 4 ounces of juice a day or less
- 4 to 6 years: Only 6 ounces of juice a day or less
- 7 years and older: Only 8 ounces of juice a day or less

### Avoid Tobacco Smoke

Children who smoke, vape, or are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home or car have an increased risk of heart disease when they get older. For information on how to quit, visit <https://www.nysmokefree.com/>.

### Encourage Healthy Sleep Habits

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that young people sleep at least 8 to 10 hours per night. Set clear rules about bedtime and limit the

use of electronic devices leading up to bedtime.

### Encourage Physical Activity

An active child is a healthier child. Kids should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Physical activity in childhood can lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some kinds of cancer. Encourage your child to be active by scheduling extracurricular activities such as sports, dance, and swimming. Make use of free and low-cost community centers and parks. Have the kids or teens follow age-appropriate exercise videos at home.

Today's children are tomorrow's adults. This February, make a commitment to your and their heart health. For more information, visit <https://www.montefiore.org/heartmonth> and to learn more about free, monthly, educational zoom classes, contact us at [healtheducation@montefiore.org](mailto:healtheducation@montefiore.org).

*Nereyda Franco MPH, MCHE, is a senior health educator with the Office of Community and Population Health at Montefiore Health System.*

# 'Sherlock Holmes' of Microbiology Retires After 54 Years

(continued from page) 6

She added, "Be amenable to learning and adapting to new technologies as the field evolves. Additionally, always prioritize safety and take precautions when dealing with infectious agents."

Gavora was also asked what she was looking forward to in her retirement. "I plan to enjoy gardening, exploring new hobbies, and spending time with my husband, George, who's retired and my daughters, Andy and Michelle," she said. "I may even do



Photo courtesy of Viera Novak

**MICROBIOLOGIST, MARTA GAVORA**, with her sister, Viera Novak, as young adults in The Bronx



Photo courtesy of Montefiore Medical Center staff

**MICROBIOLOGIST, MARTA GAVORA**, is seen with her colleagues in the microbiology lab at Montefiore Medical Center in an undated photo before her retirement in early January 2024, after more than 50 years with the hospital.

some traveling."

Norwood News spoke to Gavora's younger sister, Viera Novak, a physical therapist who lives in Larchmont, NY, about living behind the "Iron Curtain" as well as Gavora's retirement milestone. She spoke of vivid memories of one day, early in the morning, seeing people everywhere listening to a transistor radio not to a big soccer game, but to news that the country had been invaded by Russia.

"I didn't have a TV or anything," Novak said, adding that Gavora was then working in Bratislava, the capital of now Slovakia. She recalled seeing

Russians in her small town. "They didn't shoot or anything," Novak said matter-of-factly. "They were just passing through to the capital."

She added, "They just damaged some buildings and nothing really much, took the president out, and then put their own president there, and we were under the lock." She said the siblings finally got out, obtaining a special visa, and traveling through Austria by train. She said her parents first visited the U.S. in 1976, after surviving the decades-long, Russian occupation of their homeland in hiding.

Novak said close to 100 of her family members, who were Jewish, as is she, died, many in Auschwitz. "My mother always wanted to be cremated, even though it is not the Jewish tradition," she said. "It is actually against the Jewish tradition, because all her family were cremated against their own will."

Of Gavora's milestone, Novak concluded, "My sister is very shy but together, we went to ask [the Montefiore physician] if they had a position. He was very nice. He said ok. She can be on a three-month training, and after three months, I guess she proved herself!"



# Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

## EVENTS

Join Woodlawn Conservancy's director of historical services, Susan Olsen, in conversation with *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning writer Katherine Howe, for a **Virtual Book Discussion** on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m. Olsen and Howe, author of "Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty" and "Astor: The Rise and Fall of American Fortune" will explore the notable Vanderbilts and Astors forever at rest at Woodlawn, and their deep-rooted business, social, and philanthropic legacies. The zoom link is as follows: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81548965928#success>.

BAAD! [Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance] celebrates its 25th anniversary this year and is marking its birthday by presenting "Get Tough, Get BAAD!" The annual series of films and events is being held throughout February at BAAD, located at 2474 Westchester Avenue in Westchester Square, and celebrates queer power, diversity, defiance, strength, and visibility. Most events are free, and the dance concert is \$20. For reservations, directions, and

further information call (718) 918-2110 or visit [www.BAADBronx.org](http://www.BAADBronx.org).

The Bronx Library Center, located at 310 East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458, is hosting a number of **Free Adult Programs**, including Art, Tax Prep, computer classes and more, throughout February. Phone (718) 579 4244 for more details. The Bronx Historical Society presents a virtual book talk on Feb. 12, at 3 p.m. on *Voodoo MacBeth* (2006) with author, artist and former resident of Allerton Coops, Norris Burroughs, to mark **Black History Month**. Register here: <https://bronxhistoricalsociety.org/voodoo-macbeth>.

## ART

Children and families are invited to join a **Valentine's Day Art Workshop** at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467, on Sunday, Feb. 11, from 12.30 to 2.30 p.m. to make Valentine's Day cards, arts and crafts.

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

## MUSIC

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West Bronx, New York 10468, presents the

**Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra** from Bulgaria on Sunday, Feb. 11, at 4 p.m. with a complete Beethoven program, including Coriolan Overture, Piano Concerto No. 5, and Symphony No. 7, featuring piano soloist Iyaylo Vassilev. Visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/sofia-philharmonic> for more information and to buy tickets.

**Bronx Opera** in Two One Act Comic Operas presents *IL Signor Bruschino* by Rossini and Gianni Schicchi by Puccini on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7.30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 11, at 2.30 p.m. at Lehman College/Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Park Blvd. West, The Bronx. Tickets range from \$30-\$40. Reserve at: [our.show/BxOBruSchi](http://our.show/BxOBruSchi).

## DANCE

Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, located at 500 Grand Concourse [at 149th Street], Bronx, NY 10451, presents the acclaimed **Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company**, a leading force in Chinese dance on Sunday, Feb. 18, at 3 p.m. In 2024, the Year of the Dragon, witness the power and auspicious energy of strength, courage, and good fortune. The Nai-Ni Chen dancers will present traditional and contemporary Chinese dances, including the mesmerizing "Dragon Dance," the lively "Lion Dance," and the elegant "Peacock Dance." Experience new works like the hip-hop-inspired "Lion in the City." Visit <https://www.hostos.cuny.edu/culturearts/events/Year2024/February/Nai-Ni-Chen-Dance-Company/> or call the Hostos box office at (718) 518-4455 for more information.

## MOVEMENT

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](mailto:Kelsey.Phoenix@parks.nyc.gov).

**Tai Chi for Peace of Mind and Body** takes place at NYBG on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. through April 6, (excluding Feb. 10, Feb. 17, and March 30) at the Watson Education Building. This ancient, meditative, Chinese exercise teaches relaxation, balance, and self-defense with an emphasis on correct body posture and spinal alignment. Students become relaxed, physically stronger, and ultimately healthier in both mind and body. Visit <https://www.enrole.com/nybg/jsp/session.jsp?sessionId=243WEL102&courseId=154WEL102&c> for more details.

## City of Yes Program Met with Concern at CB8 Meeting

(continued from page 4)

in Riverdale. It was mentioned that the construction was due to be completed by the end of January.

There was also a discussion on multiple redevelopment projects taking place at 69 Stevenson Place, 71 Stevenson Place, 3862 Sedgwick Avenue, and 3874 Sedgwick Avenue, all in Van Cortlandt Village. Concerns were raised that these buildings were being redeveloped to increase the number of apartments in the building, with no plans to extend the building's size.

"I don't see how within the bulk of an existing building you can now have twice as many apartments unless the rooms become a rabbit warren," said Moerdler. The committee chair said the board would send a letter to NYC Department of Buildings requesting that no permits or applications be approved at the Van Cortlandt Village buildings before first notifying the CB8 committee.


Similarly, some members of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) had also raised some concerns about the City of Yes rezoning amendments when they were presented to the CB7 Land Use committee last October, though it was

generally acknowledged that the existing zoning rules were outdated, and due a revision. Representatives from NYC Department of Planning (DCP) gave a presentation on the amendments, noted questions, and returned at the CB7 November board meeting with responses to the various points raised.


At that November CB7 board meeting, land use chair Sandra Erickson tabled the motion to send a letter of support to DCP in favor of the proposed amendments. Some members expressed concerns about how the changes would affect small businesses with limited resources, and suggested there was a general lack of awareness by the public about the proposed changes. The board ultimately voted in favor of the motion, though it was not unanimous.

The CB8 Land Use & Economic Development committee met again on Monday, Feb. 5. We will share further updates in due course. The next Bronx CB7 Land Use committee meeting takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 6.30 p.m. Email [kca-breracarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:kca-breracarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the meeting distribution list.

*\*Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Department of Transportation



DIVISION OF TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Removal of Existing and Furnishing, Installing  
of new LED Underdeck Luminaries, New York City

Contract No.: **84122MBTR542**  
NYCPIN: **84122MBTR542**  
EPIN: **84122B0037**

This Competitive Sealed Bid is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this Bid must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors should visit the PASSPort public portal at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/mocs/passport/about-passport.page> and click on the "Procurement Navigator." This will take you to the Public Portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system. To locate the Competitive Sealed Bid, insert the EPIN, 84122B0037, into the keyword search field. In order to respond to the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

This procurement is subject to MBE and WBE participation goals. The MBE goals for this project is 8% and WBE goals for this project 30%.

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed by email to agency contact [nkumar@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:nkumar@dot.nyc.gov), under the subject line "EPIN: 84122B0037."

**A pre-bid conference via ZOOM is scheduled for 02/14/2024 at 10:00 am. Those wishing to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link.**

**The deadline for the submission of questions is 02/20/2024 by 4:00 pm.**

**The bid due date (submission via PASSPort), as well as hard copy as instructed, is due 03/13/2024 by 11:00 am.**

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed to agency contact Navneet Kumar via email [nkumar@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:nkumar@dot.nyc.gov), under the subject line "EPIN: 84122B0037."

Eric Adams, Mayor

Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



## Changes to Trash Collection

NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) is advising residents there will be no trash, curbside composting, or recycling collection on Lincoln's Birthday, Monday, Feb. 12, and Presidents' Day, Monday, Feb. 19.

On Feb. 12, residents who normally receive Monday trash, curbside compost or recycling collection may place their material out at curbside Monday evening for collection beginning Tuesday, Feb. 13.

On Feb. 19, residents who normally receive Monday trash, curbside compost or recycling collection may place their material out at curbside Monday evening for collection beginning Tuesday, Feb. 20. DSNY officials said residents may experience collection delays, after the holidays.

## Community Input Needed for Poe Park

NYC Department of Parks & Recreation will be hosting a Community Input Meeting for the reconstruction of Poe Park Playground on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Register at <https://www.nycgovparks.org/reg/community-input-meetings/14760/register>.

## Alternate Side Parking Rules Suspended

NYC Department of Sanitation

(DSNY) is advising residents that alternate side parking rules are suspended on Friday, Feb. 9, and Saturday, Feb. 10, for Lunar New Year's Eve and Lunar New Year.

## NYC DOT Strategic Plan

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing a new Strategic Plan to guide its future work. DOT officials are inviting residents to share their thoughts via a survey by March 1, 2024 here. The survey can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SP24English>. It's also available in other languages. Visit <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/stratplan.shtml>, and select the desired language.

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

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

- 2072 Anthony Ave., Bronx, NY 10457, with a deadline of Feb. 12
- 3001 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468, with a deadline of April 3
- 1761 Walton Ave., Bronx, NY 10453, with a deadline of Feb. 13
- 2330 Cambreleng Ave, Bronx, NY 10458, with a deadline of Jan. 31
- Betances VI Family Apartments, 405 E 146th St, Bronx, NY 10455, with a dead-

line of Feb. 13.

- 1160 River Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10452, with a deadline of Feb. 22.
- HPD frequently extends the announced deadlines.

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

## Veterans Services

NYC Department of Veterans' Services is reminding all veterans that assistance with housing, legal services, burial services, free mental health services, wellness, employment, benefits and much more is available to them. Email [connect@veterans.nyc.gov](mailto:connect@veterans.nyc.gov) or call (212) 416-5250 for more information.

## Kingsbridge Library Temporary Closure

Kingsbridge Library is temporarily closed as according to NYPL, the branch is currently undergoing repairs to its HVAC unit, which library officials said was causing a lack of heat in the building. On Feb. 1, library officials wrote, "Unfortunately, the repairs have not been completed. We are looking at another week for the closure. Any reserves that are on our shelf or in transit will be extended for patrons. Note our dropbox is CLOSED. Please return to the nearest location or when we reopen. Reminder: NO more late fees. Thank you for your patience and support as we work to resolve this issue. The Kingsbridge Library"

## Shared Work Program

NYS Department of Labor is seeking to help nonprofits which may be encountering 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](https://dol.ny.gov/shared-work-program-0?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

## Ramp Works

Works by NYC Department of Design & Construction are expected during the first quarter of 2024 at various locations in The Bronx for the rehabilitation of a simple pedestrian ramp, including on Hull Avenue, between East 209th Street, and East Moshulu Parkway North, and on East 211th Street between Hull Avenue and Perry Avenue in Norwood.

## Open Streets Application

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) works with community-based organizations, educational institutions, and business groups to develop opera-

tional plans to manage the street for multiple uses [Open Streets program], including outdoor dining, programming, and outdoor learning/recreation for schools.

DOT works with partners and local stakeholders to ensure loading, deliveries, and emergency access is coordinated as part of the Open Streets' operations. The Open Streets application is for partners that want to manage their own Open Street. Returning partners may use previously submitted data based on their application ID for an even more streamlined application process. New partners must submit a full application.

The 2024 application features important deadlines partners should consider before applying. For Open Streets launching on or after July 1, 2024, the deadline is March 1, 2024, which is also the deadline is also for any school applying for the 2024-2025 academic year. Please visit [nyc.gov/OpenStreets](https://nyc.gov/OpenStreets) for more information.

## Upcoming Voter Registration & Election Deadlines

The U.S. presidential primaries take place on April 2. Early voting starts March 23. The primary elections for Congress, State, and party positions take place on 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 primaries. Visit <https://vote.nyc.gov/register-vote> to register to change party affiliation.

## Summer Internship Programs

The Bronx Defenders are hiring interns. Apply at [bxd.pub/jobs](https://bxd.pub/jobs).

The Office of the New York City Comptroller is also running a paid summer internship program from June 3 to Aug. 1, 28 hours per week. The application period is open and ends on Feb. 23. To apply, visit <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/jobs/summer-internship-program>.

## Bronx Speak-Up Event

The 30th Bronx Parks Speak-Up event takes place on Saturday, Feb. 24, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Lehman College Faculty Dining Room, Music Building, 250 Bedford Park Blvd W, Bronx, NY 10468, in conjunction with Con Edison, Partnership for Parks, Bronx Council for Environmental Quality and BCPGS. Visit [www.bronxpeakup.org](https://www.bronxpeakup.org) for more details.

## Discretionary Funding Application Period Open

City Councilman Kevin Riley (C.D. 12) is currently accepting applications until Feb. 20 from eligible, nonprofit community-based organizations that wish to apply for discretionary funding for Financial Year 2025. Call (718) 684-5509 or email [District12@council.nyc.gov](mailto:District12@council.nyc.gov) for more information.

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# Bronx Jazz Singer Samara Joy Wins Third Grammy

by **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Bronx Jazz artist, Samara Joy, took home the Grammy for Best Jazz Performance for her song, "Tight" at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards held in Los Angeles on Sunday, Feb. 4. The category covers new vocal or instrumental solo, duo/group or collaborative jazz recordings.

As reported, Joy, [née McLendon], an alum of both Fordham High School of the Arts and SUNY's Purchase College, was a relatively unknown jazz singer before she was awarded her first Grammy for Best New Artist at last year's Annual Grammy Awards.

She also won a Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album last year for her 2022 album "Linger." This year, Joy beat heavyweights like Jon Batiste for his "Move-me 180 (Heroes)," Lakecia Benjamin's "Basquiat," Adam Blackstone's "Vulnerable (Live)" featuring The Baylor Project & Russell Ferranté, and Fred Hersch & Esperanza Spalding's "But Not For Me."

During her acceptance speech, the 24-year-old Castle Hill native said, "Oh my goodness! Thank y'all so much. I want to thank my mom and dad in the audience, Antonio and Janice McLendon. I want to thank the incredible band that played with me on this song, Luther Allison (pianist), Mikey Migliore (bassist) and Evan Sherman."

Joy continued, "I want to thank Betty Carter, composer and singer, and

inspiration. I want to thank my team. I want to thank all of you artists for being so inspiring. Thank you, thank you, thank you so much!"

Joy's colleague, Kendrick McCallister, was also among the nominees as arranger in the category, "Best Arrangement, Instruments and Vocals." McCallister was nominated for Joy's "Lush Life" album but lost to arrangers, Erin Bentlage, Jacob Collier, Sara Gazarek, Johnaye Kendrick & Amanda Taylor, for sàje's "In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning," featuring Jacob Collier.

According to Wikipedia, Joy recorded her first self-titled album while still in college, and her win for Best New Artist makes her only the second jazz singer to win the award, the first being Esperanza Spalding in 2011.

The legendary Dr. Stevie Wonder, a 2023 graduate of Fordham University, as reported, led tributes, along with Lenny Kravitz and Annie Lennox, Jon Batiste and others, to those the music industry lost in 2023, including Tina Turner, Tony Bennett, Clarence Avant, Sinéad O'Connor and Burt Bacharach.

Meanwhile, it was widely reported that rapper, Killer Mike, whose real name is Michael Render, 48, the winner of three Grammys on the night, was escorted out of the event by police in handcuffs. When contacted, the Los An-

geles Police Department told Norwood News, "On Sunday, February 4th, just after 4 p.m., a male adult was detained & handcuffed for a physical altercation that occurred at the 700 block of Chick Hearn Court."

The LAPD added, "The suspect was placed under arrest and was transported to LAPD Central Division. The suspect has been identified as 48-year-old Michael Render and booked for Misdemeanor Battery 243(A) PC, Booking #6754010. Render has been released on zero bail."

According to an article published on Billboard, in a Monday morning interview on V103's Big Tigger Morning Show, the Grammy-winning artist downplayed the incident and did not address it directly, referring to it as a "speedbump." He was subsequently quoted as having referred to the security guard involved in the incident as "overzealous"

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



Photo by Alberto E. Rodriguez/Getty Images for The Recording Academy

**SAMARA JOY, WINNER** of the "Best Jazz Performance" award for her song, "Tight", poses in the press room during the 66th GRAMMY Awards at Crypto.com Arena on February 4, 2024, in Los Angeles, California.

# Citywide Scooter Bandit Network Busted!

(continued from page 3)

are purchased, often online, and so-called "ghost guns" which are purchased as component parts and assembled at home on a 3-D printer, Caban said, "They're essentially ghost criminals; no criminal history, no photos, no cell phone, no social media. They intentionally try to evade the police."

NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny said of the scooter robberies, "These thieves would ride up behind their victims on the sidewalk, steal their property, and then make their getaway." Kenny added that most of the victims were women.

Police said a hired scooter rider would earn \$100 a day as part of the for-hire robbery pattern while "phone snatchers" could earn between \$300 to \$600 per phone. They said stolen phones were delivered to Parra, the alleged ring-leader, who had been living at 2970 Bronx Park East (Parkside Housing) since April 2023.

Police said the phones would later be used to access a victim's financial records and banking apps to make fraudulent purchases in the United States and in South America. They said the phones would then be shipped to Columbia to be reprogrammed.

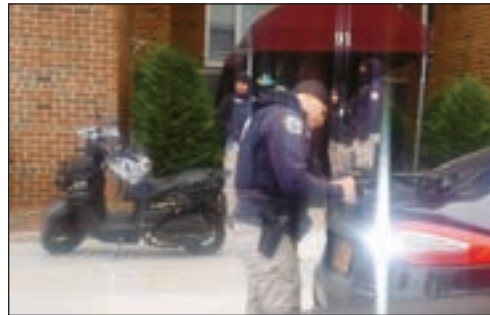


Photo by David Greene

**FOUR POLICE OFFICERS** fill out paperwork after an apparently stopping a scooter rider outside 91 Van Cortlandt Avenue West in Van Cortlandt Village on Monday, Jan. 15, 2024. When contacted, the NYPD press office said they had no information on the stop based on the information we provided to them.

According to Kenny, police arrested five people at Parra's home, recovered 22 stolen phones there, and are searching for six more people linked to the scheme. Kenny added that since Jan. 1, the NYPD has had 32 open robbery patterns identified involving 147 individual crimes. They said it is not yet known if the current arrests in relation to the 62 robberies are linked to any of the other open

robbery patterns identified. Police said Parra's operation netted hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The following were arrested and charged with grand larceny: Yan Jimenez, 25, Manhattan; Anthony Ramos, 21, Manhattan; Richard Saledo, 21, Allerton Avenue, The Bronx; Beike Jimenez, 21, Allerton Avenue, The Bronx; Maria Manaura, 32, Manhattan; Cleyber Andrade, 20, Brooklyn, and Juan Uzcatgui, 23, Manhattan. Police noted that some of the individuals named had been arrested prior to Monday's raid.

The Bronx District Attorney's office also announced the arrest of Alexander Dayker, 20, and Roxanna Sahos, 24, arrested during the Bronx Park East raid on Feb. 5, and said both were charged with possession of stolen property and tampering with evidence.

Police continue to hunt for Parra, who they said was not home when they carried out the raid, as well as seven additional people. The NYPD said they have not, for now, tied the latest scooter-related robbery pattern to three other similar robbery sprees that have been identified in

the 44<sup>th</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Precincts.

Norwood News recently photographed two separate incidents where it appeared an NYPD unit was stopping a scooter rider. The first was at Sedgwick Avenue and Hillman Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village on Saturday, Dec. 16, and the second at Van Cortlandt Avenue West at Orloff Avenue also in Van Cortlandt Village, on Jan. 15.

When contacted by Norwood News at the time for more information on these incidents, the NYPD press office said they had no details based on the information provided to them.

After hearing of the raid and arrests, Louise Salant of Amalgamated Housing Corporation, a Van Cortlandt Village co-op, said, "Arresting migrants for criminal activity is meaningless if they're then released without bail." When asked if she felt safer knowing some arrests had been made, she said, "No, I don't feel any safer. Actually, every arrest [that results in] an almost immediate release only encourages more criminals."

Norwood News will continue to follow this developing story.

Those arrested are deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

*\*Síle Moloney contributed to this story.*





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## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place in February [date TBC]. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7)** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 6.30 p.m. at Bronx Business Tech Incubator, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl., 2501 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

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

The next **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meeting will be held on Wednesday, March. 6, 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](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).



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

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

Project or Contract Title:  
Request for Proposal – REI Services in Connection with Component Rehabilitation of 8 Bridges in the Borough of Bronx.  
Contract No. HBCR22A  
PIN: 84124BXR638

Expected Contract Term: 1020 Consecutive Calendar Days starting from the date of the Notice to Proceed.

#### Description of Services Required:

The services to be procured is the REI Services in Connection with Component Rehabilitation of 8 Bridges in the Borough of Bronx.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Optional) has been scheduled for February 21, 2024, Time: 10:00 AM through Zoom. Proposers who wish to attend the virtual meeting can access by using the Link provided in the "Prepare RFX" Section - SETUP Tab - Pre-Proposal/Pre-Bid Conference Section in PASSPort.

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

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this RFP must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the RFP, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/mocs/systems/about-go-to-passport.page> and click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort" blue box. Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system. To quickly locate the RFP, insert the 84124P0007 into the Keyword search field. To respond to the RFP, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

**Release Date: February 14, 2024**

**Pre-Proposal Conference: February 21, 2024, at 10 AM**

**Submission of Request for Proposals are due on or before 2:00 PM on March 25, 2024**



# Love Your Heart!

(continued from page 1)

Bustamente, section chief of general cardiology at Montefiore, said, “Heart disease is very common. We usually think of a middle-aged man or older who gets heart disease, but we know that’s not true. We know that patients who are younger are at risk, women are at risk, and we know that minorities are at risk.”

Slipczuk continued, “All of these groups of patients, when they have symptoms, don’t usually go to a doctor, and many times when they *do* go to a doctor, the doctors may not think they have heart disease. So, it’s very important to take a proactive approach to controlling the risk factors.”

Slipczuk said these factors include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, exercise, diet, and smoking. “If you control all those risk factors, you have a lot less chance of developing heart disease, and it’s a lot easier to control early on,” he said.

Women in particular are at great risk when it comes to heart disease. According to the CDC, over 60 million women in the United States (44%) live with some form of heart disease. CDC officials also say heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, and in 2021, it was responsible for around one in every five female deaths.

Peter P. Semczuk, senior vice president of clinical services and executive director at Montefiore’s Moses campus, said, “Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of women and men in this country. It turns out that

when a woman has a heart attack, she’s twice as likely to die than a man, and that really saddens me, because of knowing the types of advanced diagnostics that we have available.”

Grammy and Academy Award-winning singer-songwriter, actor, producer, and director, Barbra Streisand, has long been outspoken in her efforts to raise awareness about heart disease in women. In 2008, she helped raise \$22 million for the cause, including a personal donation of \$10 million to the Women’s Heart Center at Cedar Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

“I think women are embarrassed to talk about heart disease because there is a stigma attached to it,” Streisand said during a prior lecture at the National Institute of Health. “It is known as an old man’s disease in a sense, so many people think it just affects older men, but that is not true.”

Indeed, heart disease has been on the rise for decades. A study by the World Heart Federation found that deaths from cardiovascular disease jumped globally from 12.1 million in 1990, to 20.5 million in 2021.

“So, there’s a recent increase in cardiovascular disease,” said Slipczuk. “We have about 50 percent of people when they [are] over 20 years of age, that have some sort of cardiovascular disease. We know that this is mainly due to hypertension, and we think these trends are, in part, because of the lack of control of risk factors,” he said.

Meanwhile, according to the organization [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org), while



Photo by Síle Moloney

**PETER P. SEMCZUK**, SENIOR vice president of clinical services and executive director at Montefiore’s Moses campus, addresses those gathered at the campus, located at 111 East 210<sup>th</sup> Street in Norwood on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, to raise awareness of heart disease prevention.

one in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, heart disease is the cause of one out of every three deaths in American women. Streisand has highlighted that despite this, much of the research on heart disease has traditionally focused on men.

During the event, important information about prevention and management of heart disease, through a healthy diet and exercise, was discussed. To reduce the risk of heart disease, Slipczuk emphasized the importance of monitoring key health indicators and adopting a nutritious diet, while Semczuk underscored the

significance of listening to one’s body and taking prompt action if any abnormalities are detected.

“So, what can you do? Check your blood cholesterol, check your blood pressure, check your blood sugar, and if they are high, please go to a cardiologist,” he said. “Go to your PCP and get it treated. You should eat a healthy diet full of vegetables and fruits, and try to avoid ultra-processed foods,” he added.

Meanwhile, addressing those gathered, Semczuk concluded, “You know your bodies better than anybody, and if there’s something that just doesn’t feel right, do something about it.”



Photo by Síle Moloney

**DR. LEANDRO N. SLIPCZUK** Bustamente, section chief of general cardiology at Montefiore, addresses those gathered at Montefiore’s Moses campus, located at 111 East 210<sup>th</sup> Street in Norwood on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, to raise awareness of heart disease prevention, while many attendees wore red.



Photo courtesy of Cedars-Sinai.

**BARBRA STREISAND**, SINGER, actor, producer, and director, poses for a photo with Noel Bairey Merz, M.D., director of The Barbra Streisand Women’s Heart Center in the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles, CA, in October 2020.



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