



NORWOOD NEWS

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FEDS BUST 16 DRUG TRAFFICKERS



Photo by Síle Moloney

FEDERAL PROSECUTORS ANNOUNCED on March 6, 2024, the arrests and filing of drug trafficking and criminal gun possession charges against an “armed and violent” gang of 16 who allegedly terrorized the neighborhood blocks located between East 194th Street and East 196th Street on Valentine Avenue in Fordham Manor over many years.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Federal prosecutors for the Southern District of New York announced on Wednesday, March 6, that charges were filed against 16 members and leaders of “an armed and violent drug trafficking crew” who operated the racket with deadly

consequences for their victims on Valentine Avenue in Fordham Manor for over 10 years.

Representatives for U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said law enforcement executed a search warrant on the night of March 5 and the morning of March 6 in the Fordham Manor

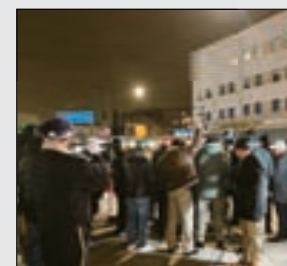
neighborhood which, Williams said, had long been “held hostage” by the traffickers. “As alleged, day in, day out, this crew distributed fentanyl, heroin, and crack along several blocks of Valentine Avenue, effectively creating an open drug market,” Williams said.

He continued, “To protect their territory, they allegedly carried guns, extorted addicts through threats of violence, and far too often, also used violence against rivals and anyone else who attempted to weaken their control of their block.”

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Norwood: Dispute Over Fire Origin, 3 Minor Injuries

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The FDNY said three people were injured following a fire that broke out in the early hours of Monday morning, March 4, in Norwood. Meanwhile, there appears to be a difference of opinion about where the fire actually started, with the FDNY saying the third floor while many residents of the building allege it started on the first floor.

The FDNY said all hands were asked to respond to a call at 2:14 a.m. regarding a fire at 275 East Gun Hill Road, a 6-story residential building. They said the fire was on the 3rd floor and that 12 units comprising 60 fire and EMS personnel responded to the scene. They said the three injured people were treated and released at the scene and the fire was brought under control at 3:11 a.m. They added that fire marshals will investigate the cause of the blaze.

Two videos recorded by Marc, a resident of the building, show extensive damage to the building. Marc said he had been due to get up for work an hour after the fire broke out, when he was awoken by his sister who was screaming “fire” at around 2 a.m. He said residents began to evacuate the building as the FDNY were arriving.

Marc said it was quite a chaotic scene and that he had to take some time to get his two dogs before evacuating. We asked if the dogs had been frightened and he said at least one had been coughing due to the smoke. “You could smell the smoke once I woke up and we looked up into the hallway, because we were going to try to run downstairs because we have our animals and everything, but once we looked in the hallway, it was just so fogged up, you couldn’t even see the neighbor’s doors or anything,” Marc said.

Asked if a fire alarm had gone off, he replied, “No fire alarm went off.” Asked if there were regular fire drills held in the building, he said, “Not as of lately from what I’m aware of. Back then, growing up, yeah, they used to do this, but I mean I guess they fell off throughout the years.”

Asked if there was a sprinkler system, he said that the building was old and as far as he knew, it didn’t have a sprinkler system. Marc added, “But I mean the building works together so you know, once they screamed, ‘Fire!’ everybody was helping... if anybody needed help.” Marc alleges the fire started on the first floor.

When we informed one female resident who declined to be identified that the FDNY said the fire was on the third floor, she also said, “No, it started on the first floor.” Pointing to one side of the building near Apartment 1B, the woman added, “No, go outside. That’s where the fire started. Go ahead and look at where the fire started. It was on the first floor.”

The door of Apartment 1B was seen damaged by fire/smoke as was the ceiling overhead in the hallway. A window in the hallway opposite the apartment door was broken and the damaged contents of Apartment 1B were seen lined up outside the apartment. The smell of smoke was still prevalent. More damaged items were seen outside the building in a little courtyard area.

Frederic Klein, regional communications manager from the American Red Cross, said that after the fire, the organization registered two households (four



Photo by Sile Moloney

DAMAGE IS SEEN to the door of Apartment 1B at 275 East Gun Hill Road in Norwood on Monday, March 4, 2024, after a fire broke out earlier that morning.

individuals) for emergency assistance, including temporary lodging and financial assistance.

“Any residents affected by this fire who need help with their recovery and were not able to connect with the Red Cross on scene should call 877-RED CROSS (877-733-2767),” he said. On Monday evening, a male and female resident of Apartment 1B were seen inside the building, half asleep, sitting on their damaged belongings under the stairs outside their damaged apartment. We asked if they had been assisted by the Red Cross and they said they had been, but that the hotel at LaGuardia Airport where they had been put up was too far away from their apartment to get to.

We asked if we could assist them in calling anyone and they agreed to share their number which we passed on to the Red Cross. Klein later provided an update, saying, “Our team spoke with the residents and reiterated the various resources that are available to assist with their recovery, including temporary lodging, financial assistance (which can be used to cover immediate needs, such as transportation or storage) and access to a Red Cross case-worker in the morning.”

When *Norwood News* spoke to other residents of the building on Monday, they also disputed that the fire was on the third floor and said it started on the 1st floor in Apartment 1B. We checked again with the FDNY and were informed that the fire was on the third floor.

Speaking in Spanish, a second female resident said the smoke was reaching people’s lungs. The woman went on to say that her apartment was located on the same side of the building as Apartment 1B and that the smoke had risen through the air conditioning system and had entered all the apartments in the floors above it.

We later spoke to another male resident of the building who also declined to be identified and who said he had called 911 to raise the alarm. He also said he believed the fire started in Apartment 1B. We asked how he knew this. “I was told,” he said. “And I kinda witnessed.” Referring to a male resident of Apartment 1B, the man said, “He was playing with acetone, like nail polish remover and fire.” We asked the man if he saw this directly and if he had been inside Apartment 1B at the time to see it for himself.

The man laughed and referring to the resident of Apartment 1B said, “No,

I don’t associate with that man.” We asked again how he saw the man “playing with acetone” therefore. He said, “[I] opened my door because I went to go scream at them because they were making noise in the hallway, because he was doing some other stuff.”

The man continued, “And I really don’t like too much traffic, and he brings a lot of danger to the building so whenever I hear noise in the building, I’m like.. ‘Go to security.’” Asked to describe what had

happened, the man said, “I mean, I heard noises. They were banging on something. I think he was either breaking apart or building a shelf or trying to build a shelf, him and maybe somebody else.” Asked if this was inside Apartment 1B, the man said, “No, it was in the hallway, and then I came out. I told them.... because it was like...this was probably like from 12 to two [in the morning].”

The man said he then came out of his apartment and told the two to move their stuff to their side of the corridor because he didn’t want their stuff in front of his apartment. “They were making too much noise in the front of my door,” he said. “I closed my door. I heard the guys like jumping around again. I went to go back outside. Then I see the smoke and the guy that he was with, he came out like, like kind of laughing at the... at the dude so I’m thinking they created like a small fire.”

The man said that the second man who was with the resident of Apartment 1B said the resident of Apartment 1B was just “going crazy” and had “spilled some fire on some CDs or something.” The resident we spoke to said he told the visitor to Apartment 1B to tell the resident of that apartment to put out the fire and said he then closed his door again because he didn’t want the smoke to enter and assumed it was just a minor flame. He said he later heard the resident’s girlfriend screaming due to the fire and that’s when everyone later evacuated.

The man alleges the residents of 1B owned cats and that they let the cats die in the fire. We asked the FDNY if this was the case. We did not receive an immediate response.

An unpopulated (empty fields) fire safety plan was seen posted inside the main door of the building. *Norwood News* contacted the Management Company, 275 Gjonovic Realty Inc., by phone and email for comment on fire safety arrangements in the building. We did not receive any. We also contacted the tenant from 1B for comment on this story. We did not receive an immediate response.

On Tuesday, March 5, the residents of 1B were seen by a local store owner standing outside the building on East Gun Hill Road with their damaged belongings. At home fire safety tips can be found at www.fdnysmart.org.

Veteran, Luis Moreno, 19, Remembered

By **ARIEL PACHECO & SÍLE MOLONEY**

Family, friends, veterans, and community leaders gathered for a vigil on Jan. 29 in Fordham Manor to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of veteran, Luis Moreno, a 19-year-old soldier from The Bronx who was killed in the line of duty in Iraq.

The vigil was held on the corner of Fordham Road and Grand Concourse, which was co-named Luis Moreno Way last summer in his honor. Attendees commemorated Moreno's life with words, songs, and prayers on a bitterly cold evening, amid noisy passing traffic. Gathered in a circle, they held small candles that flickered poignantly in the dark as they recalled the young fallen soldier.

Sammy Ravelo, former candidate for Bronx borough president and president of Dominican Veterans of America, started the vigil with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

"This evening, we come together as a community, not just to mourn the loss of a brave soldier, but to celebrate the indomitable spirit of dedication and sacrifice that defines our vet-



FAMILY, FRIENDS, VETERANS, and community leaders gather for a vigil on Jan. 29, 2024, on the Grand Concourse and Fordham Road in Fordham Manor to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of veteran, United States Private First-Class Luis Moreno, who was killed at age 19 in the line of duty in Baghdad, Iraq on Jan. 29, 2004.

erans," Ravelo said. "Through this vigil, we renew our commitment to support and honor those who selflessly defended our freedom."

"We're very glad we're bringing his service to the forefront," Ravelo continued. "He was the youngest soldier from The Bronx to die in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. We already told the family we will never forget his service and we're here to always remember."

During the event, a banner was placed on the street corner displaying a photo of

Moreno in uniform along with a passage in both English and Spanish, which read, "United States Private First Class Luis Moreno died January 29th, 2004 from wounds after he was shot in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Born in the Dominican Republic, Luis A. Moreno came to the United States in 1991 with his family. He had dreams of becoming a police officer. He was only 19 years old when he died."

According to those who knew him, Moreno was shot on Jan. 23, 2004, while guarding a gas station in Baghdad, where



Photo by Síle Moloney

he had been stationed for three months. His hometown was La Romana in the Dominican Republic.

Gonzalo Duran, CEO of Devil Dog USA, a nonprofit supporting veterans, said of Moreno, "He's a reflection of what the communities think about us. Not everybody gets recognized in this kind of fashion; he's down in history."

Meanwhile, Dion Powell, a district leader in the 78th Assembly District, who also sits on the board of Dominican Veterans of America, said, "We had a street renaming for him

last summer. Now, we're holding the first annual vigil for him and his family. He's a fallen soldier from our community, a very young member who put his life out there for our citizens."

A former city council candidate, Altagracia Soldevilla, also led the group in prayer at one point, along with a song in Spanish. A lone trumpeter also played a short musical tribute to Moreno.

The late veteran's niece, Tahiry Santana, and brother, Manuel Moreno, were also present on the night and told us, "One of the big memories I have of him is that he was a very happy person. He was very friendly and [was] liked in our neighborhood." A 4th grader at the time of his passing, Santana added, "It feels good to know that the same way the family loved and respected him, others did as well."

For his part, Manuel said, "There's always going to be a lot of memories when it's about my brother. He was a happy person, so we always try to keep his memory alive, and we are always going to be proud of him because he lost his life defending our freedom."



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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their opinion on the City's needle exchange program and the three Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs) located in the South Bronx, run in conjunction with the City's partner, OnPoint i.e. drop-in centers where users can connect with outreach workers and safely get high, avoiding unsupervised overdoses.



"No, these centers shouldn't be opened, no. It's just influencing them to do it more. They'll keep on doing it. No, it makes them want to do it more and they're getting it for free too, so what's the point? No, the outreach program is done in front of children, they shouldn't do it around kids."

Sakib Miah,
Parkchester
(Photo by David Greene)



"Basically, the needle program must be monitored from the beginning to the very end, and all of the refuse, the paraphernalia that can be a health hazard must be totally destroyed. It should be monitored with video and audio and on paper. So that way you have a record, you see what happened, and you can see the results."

Victor Mastro,
Belmont
(Photo by David Greene)



"I don't think this program should be conducted in public where kids can see it and I think it's wrong. We shouldn't support drug use. Get off drugs. The centers? It's a slippery slope. I just don't feel it should be done in public. I don't believe they should have tents where they do the exchange. To do the exchange in parks is crazy to me. It shouldn't be supported in that way. I can't see supporting people getting high. The kids see it and think it's okay."

Robert Collington,
Williamsbridge via Harlem
(Photo by David Greene)



"Well, if it helps the addicts, how many did you say died? I guess it's better than them dying. I think they should open more centers. Giving them [clean] needles in the parks? Well, they're doing it in the parks already. I see them in this area shooting here and in Fordham, so I'd have to think about it. Well, they [kids] watch them. I think getting them [users] help would be better but they're not going to want the help. It's a slippery slope, but I think it's for the best."

Gary Swift,
Williamsbridge
(Photo by David Greene)



"Yes, I believe there should be more centers because they're going to do it anyway and rather than them being out here in the park where children are at, let them do it in a center. No, I don't think the outreach program is a good idea because they may not dispose of the needles correctly and children could pick them up by accident and we don't want that. The centers are way better."

Miriam Collazo,
Kingsbridge
(Photo by David Greene)

"Norwood," "The Bronx" Mural Defaced with "Ammo" Wording

By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

A beloved, colorful mural comprising the words, "Norwood" and "The Bronx" in large lettering, located on East 207th Street and Bainbridge Avenue in Norwood, has been overwritten seemingly with the more sinister word, "Ammo," sometimes used as an abbreviation for ammunition.

It is unknown if the new wording is an attempt to mark gangland turf in the area or has a different meaning, but one resident told *Norwood News* last year when the original mural was defaced with a thick white line painted across the center that this had been done to agitate local kids who reportedly liked the mural, which was painted by artist, Laura Alvarez, with funding from former District 11 City Councilman Andrew Cohen.

In smaller lettering, accompanying the word "Ammo" is "TGK." TGK has a number of possible meanings. According to bullet manufacturer, Sierra, hunting bullets measured by diameter and weight are known as "TGK," an acronym for Tipped GameKing. Sierra manufactures a wide range of bullets for both rifles and pistols, and such bullets "are used for precision target shooting, hunting and defense purposes."

According to definitions.net, Trethewey Gangsta Killaz (aka "TGK" or the Trethewey Gangster Crips) originated in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and are a heav-

ily armed and extremely violent group. "It is alleged by Authorities that the Trethewey Gangsta Killaz were known to supply other criminal organizations with firearms around a time when police first discovered the trend of gangs lending guns to individual dealers or lesser established sets for a fee," an extract from the website reads.

It continues, "The Trethewey Gangster Crips are the latest incarnation of the TGK gang." According to mymixtapez.com, TGK Gang appear to be rap artists, based in Jacksonville, Florida.

When we asked local store owners on the block where the mural is located, when it was originally defaced, they were unsure, but it appears to have been some time in 2023.

Meanwhile, Stephen Pierson, executive director of the group, ArtBridge, told *Norwood News* in December 2023, "We are currently trying to raise funds to fix the mural in the early spring, when painting again becomes temperature-viable. We're thrilled that it [the mural] went so many years without defacement - which speaks strongly to the community-engaged way in which Laura [Alvarez] produced this."

For her part, Alvarez said, "I saw the mural was tagged back in October 2022 when I was walking by after teaching an art class at Montefiore. After that, I had several neighbors reaching out because they saw the mural was getting worse.

Fordham Manor: Elderly Man Found Dead in Home

By DAVID GREENE

Firefighters responding to a 911 call on Wednesday, Feb. 28, discovered the body of an elderly man inside a private home in Fordham Manor who reportedly showed signs of electrical burns. He could not be resuscitated according to fire officials.

An FDNY spokesperson said firefighters and paramedics were called to a private home at 373 East 194th Street at Decatur Avenue on the day in question at 9:45 a.m. The spokesperson told *Norwood News* the department received a report of a medical emergency at the location and that units reported that a patient was deceased and appeared to have electrical burns. The spokesper-

son added that there was "no transport" by EMS.

Meanwhile, an NYPD spokesperson said, "On Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, at approximately 9:32 a.m., an 81-year-old male was found unconscious and unresponsive inside of 373 East 194th Street by FDNY, after a neighbor called in a wellness check. EMS responded and pronounced the male deceased." The spokesperson added that no criminality was suspected.

The victim was later identified by police as Cipriano Delgado, 81, of 373 East 194th Street. *Norwood News* asked what the victim's cause of death was and if it was intentional or accidental. The NYPD had not responded as of press date.

Also, the landlord contacted me about repainting it."

Alvarez said she contacted Artbridge to see if there was something that could be done. "Right now, we are trying to find funding so we can paint it by spring. The idea is to hold some community engagement events to create a new design and paint the mural after."

Should anyone wish to contact Pierson or Alvarez about funding, *Norwood News* has their contact information. You can email us at smoloney@norwood-news.org.



Photo by Síle Moloney

THE "NORWOOD," "THE Bronx" mural located on East 207th Street and Bainbridge Avenue has been recently defaced with the word "Ammo," as seen on Monday night, March 5, 2024.

Fordham Manor: Gunshot Victim, 16, Flees Shooter with Two Younger Siblings

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A 16-year-old male youth reportedly sprinted for his life away from gunfire across the Grand Concourse in Fordham Manor, together with his two younger siblings aged 13 and 10, after he was shot and later pleaded with local workmen to hide him from the shooter, one worker told *Norwood News*.

Police said the incident unfolded at around 5.44 p.m. on Monday, March 4, when officers responded to a 911 call regarding a person who had been shot. Upon arrival, they said officers were informed of a confirmed male shot in the vicinity of East 184th Street and the Grand Concourse.

"The victim is a 16-year-old male with a gunshot wound to his left ankle," police said. "The victim was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition." Police said there were no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing.

Speaking in Spanish, a man standing on Valentine Avenue and East 184th Street who asked to be described as "a worker" and who declined to be identified, told *Norwood News* he had been inside the building located on the corner of the two streets when he heard about five gunshots.

He said a group of plumbers who had been outside on Valentine Avenue by an open doorway leading into the same corner building told him a terrified youth came running around the corner with his two siblings and ran in the open door

into the building.

The worker said the youth was bleeding from his leg. He said the youth cried, "They're going to kill me!" and pleaded with the plumbers not to make him leave. The worker said they put a make-shift tourniquet on the youth's leg and called 911. He said police and emergency services later arrived and took the three siblings away in an ambulance. He said the youth did not let go the hands of his two siblings once inside the building.

The worker said he had children of his own and felt it was the right thing to do. He lamented that many young people were influenced by gang pressure / gang violence. We asked if he knew if the youth in question was part of a gang or if he had been running from a gang and he said he didn't know but suspected he was. He did not know the youth.

He went on to say that the 16-year-old was losing a lot of blood. "He was lucky he didn't die," the worker said and later shared a photo of a blood-soaked scene inside the building where the workers had helped him from bleeding out.

One of the plumbers later contacted *Norwood News* directly and further described what happened once the kids ran into the building, saying in part, "We locked both doors and told everyone stay quiet. I took off my red belt and did my best to slow the bleeding." A video obtained from a local business shows the three kids, one after each other, racing across the Grand Concourse down East

184th Street by Dunkin' Donuts.

Police had cordoned off various separate crime scenes in the area, including on both corners of East 184th Street and the Grand Concourse as well as at East 184th Street and Valentine Avenue. The window of a Dunkin' Donuts on the corner of East 184th Street and the Grand Concourse was seen smashed after the incident. A police official was heard responding to a passerby, saying nobody who had been inside the eatery had been hurt.

Several plastic markers were also seen close to a median/island on the Grand Concourse closest to the corner of the Grand Concourse and East 184th Street where Kennedy Fried Chicken was located, indicating that around 5 shots had been fired. We spoke to a few people inside Kennedy's Fried Chicken, but nobody had seen the incident unfold.

We also spoke to a male worker employed in a store located near Dunkin' Donuts. The man also declined to be identified though he said he was from Yemen and suggested he had seen a lot of bad things happen in his life already. He said he heard four gunshots.

"I was in my store," he said. "I was taking care of the customers and then I went outside. I didn't see nothing." He said he was told by someone else that either the victim or the shooter had been in Dunkin' Donuts. "I see the people running and I come back [inside], save my-



Photo courtesy of a plumber who assisted the victim, who declined to be identified.

A BLOOD-SOAKED YOUTH, 16, has a tourniquet applied to his leg after he is shot in the vicinity of the Grand Concourse and East 184th Street on Monday, March 4, 2024.

(continued on page 6)

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Go “Beyond the Table” this National Nutrition Month

By MARY LOU POMPEII

National Nutrition Month is an annual campaign to help people make informed food choices and develop healthy habits. It was created 50 years ago by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), a trusted source of food and nutrition information. This year's theme is “Beyond the Table,” which aims to promote healthy meals and snacks anywhere you are!

Many of us eat some meals, snacks and beverages outside the house or school, and these choices can contribute to great or poor health. Our choices can help us

reach or maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure. Healthy eating on the go may seem hard at first. What lunch will you get near work/school? Which snacks are healthy at the corner store? Planning and bringing food with us is often the cheapest and healthiest path. To avoid making a rushed purchase, here are some great tips for healthy eating “Beyond the Table.”

Healthy Snacks Outside the Home

Whether running errands or going to appointments, feeding the kids after school, or snacking at your desk, here are some choices you can bring from home: yogurt, string cheese, a piece of whole or cut fruit, carrot sticks, nuts, dry cereal, granola bar. When you are in the store and need to grab a healthy choice, you can pick up yogurt, a piece of fruit, a packet of nuts, granola bar, a carton of flavored milk, seltzer water.

Lunch or Dinner at Work/School

Meals to bring from home like dinner leftovers of protein, grain, and non-

starchy vegetable, a sandwich on whole grain bread, homemade soup/stew/chili/grain salad like Quinoa and Black Bean Salad, salad with chicken/tuna/eggs/beans for protein are filling and quick choices that will also save you money!

When you do go out to eat at a restaurant, or pick something up from the deli, wise choices include soup, salads with protein, a sandwich on whole grain bread or wrap, a meal with vegetables and baked/broiled/grilled/steamed meat or fish.

Ways to Save Money on Food:

Like salads or cooked leafy greens? Buy a head of lettuce, cabbage, and bunches of spinach and kale rather than buying leafy greens in bags or plastic containers. Wash and tear the pieces and store them in a bag or Tupperware for later.

Some fruits and vegetables will be cheaper at different times of the year. For example, buying apples and pears in fall, oranges in the winter months and saving the purchase of strawberries for summer.

When possible, buy store brands rather than brand names. The flavor is often as good or even better!

Don't forget to look for sales using a store circular before shopping.

Watch the WASTE! Use even the smallest leftovers for a meal the next day, adding a salad or vegetables on the side to make the meal more filling. Use leftovers in egg dishes, pasta, soup, stews, casseroles, etc.

Visit <https://www.foodnetwork.com/how-to/packages/help-around-the-kitchen/how-to-store-leafy-greens> for tips on how to store leafy greens.

For help reaching your health goals, talk to your health care provider about seeing a registered dietitian or health educator. We are happy to share more tips on how to eat healthy at home, and beyond!

Mary Lou Pompeii RDN CDCES CDN is an associate wellness dietitian in the Human Resources, Total Rewards Division of Montefiore Health System.

Applications Open for Bronx Week People's Choice Award in Healthcare

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson, in partnership with the Bronx Economic Development Corporation (BXEDC), announced they are accepting nominations for the People's Choice Award for the second time in Bronx Week history. This year's award will spotlight healthcare workers, with the winner being inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame during Bronx Week's Induction Ceremony to be held on Saturday, May 18.

As reported, last year's Bronx Week People's Choice Award nominations centered around those uplifting the Bronx community in the realm of education, with Luis Torres, principal of Community School 55, also known as the Benjamin Franklin School, located at 450 St. Paul's in the Claremont Village section of The Bronx, announced the winner of the “People's Choice Award in Education.”

“We are excited to announce the return of Bronx Week and our People's Choice Award!” said Gibson. “Last year, we recognized a Bronx educator, and this

year, we are accepting nominations for a healthcare professional from our borough who has demonstrated exceptional service worthy of being included as an inductee on our Bronx Walk of Fame.”

She added, “Recognizing our healthcare workers is an opportunity to honor those who have played a crucial role in improving the health and well-being of our communities. We invite nominations that highlight these healthcare professionals' remarkable stories and accomplishments, showcasing their profound impact on our borough.”

For his part, Walsh said, “The Bronx Walk of Fame honors individuals who have not only excelled in their respective fields but have also made a noteworthy impact on the community.” He added, “This year we are so happy to extend the opportunity to outstanding healthcare workers who have demonstrated dedication to the well-being of our Bronx community. It is not merely an acknowledgment of medical proficiency, but a celebration of the profound impact healthcare workers have in their communities.”

Fordham Manor: Gunshot Victim, 16, Flees Shooter with Two Younger Siblings

(continued from page 5)

self,” he said. Asked if he saw the victim or anyone else involved in the incident, the employee, who said it was just his second week in his current role at the store, said he didn't see anyone injured or shot on the street. He just saw people running away.

The same employee was later seen praying on a mat behind a glass-enclosed counter in the store. Since Ramadan has begun, he said he prays five times a day. Asked if he was also praying to give thanks for not being shot, the man said he was and added, “Al Hamd Lala Habib,” which he said means “Thanks God.”

Asked if he felt unsafe or nervous working in the area now, the employee said, “I don't feel nervous. This is real life for me.” Asked if he had contemplated that it might have been him who was shot, he said, “I'm not scared because everybody will die. If it was time for me to die today, I'm gonna die today.”

On the opposite side of the Grand Concourse, also on an island/median near Kennedy Fried Chicken, were the remains of what appeared to be a mangled

e-bike entangled in some crime scene tape. We asked a police officer guarding the crime scene if the e-bike was part of the crime scene related to the shooting or unrelated. He said he was unable to share any information in this regard.

Shootings in the 46th Precinct, where the incident took place are down according to police statistics as of the end of February, though overall Bronx shootings were up, as of the same date, compared to the same timeframe last year.

When we suggested to the worker who had assisted the victim that he was a hero for having done so, the man said, “I like to think that if you do something good, something good will happen to you in return.”

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

All calls are strictly confidential.

**David Greene contributed to this story.*



Photo by Síle Moloney

(L TO R) LUIS TORRES, 2023 BRONX Walk of Fame inductee and winner of the People's Choice Award in Education, Veronica Guity, Bronx week 2023 event host and marketing and social media manager at the Bronx Tourism Council, Melissa Cebollero from the Office of Community Affairs at Montefiore Health System, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Juliet Papa, 2023 Bronx Walk of Fame inductee, an event attendee, Marcos Crespo senior vice president of community affairs at Montefiore Health System and Sulma Arzu-Brown, executive director of the Bronx Tourism Council, pose for a photo during the launch of Bronx Week 2023 at the Bronx Children's Museum located at 725 Exterior Street in the South Bronx on Monday, May 8, 2023.

NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Poe Park to Get \$3.4 Million Renovation

District 15 City Council Member Oswald Feliz was joined by Bronx CB7 Community Board 7 District Manager Karla Cabrera Carrera to announce a \$3.4 million investment in the renovation of Poe Park playground in Fordham Manor on Feb. 27. "Parks are important; it's where families picnic, relax, & children make new friends," Feliz said. The councilman thanked City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams for making the investment possible. He also joined a virtual community input meeting hosted by NYC Parks and the City Parks Foundation on Feb. 28 to listen to input from the public on the playground's future. "Proud to invest in our parks!" Feliz said.

CUNY Extends Deadline to Commit to College to June 1

City University of New York (CUNY), the nation's largest public university, recently announced that amid delays with the U.S. Department of Education's federal free application for Federal Student Aid Program (FAFSA), CUNY will move its deadline for acceptance of students' admission offers, known as College Decision Day or National Candidate Reply Commitment Day, from May 1 to June 1.

The new extended date is designed to help students who won't receive federal financial aid data until April. CUNY officials said nearly 175,000 students or over 75% of CUNY undergraduates receive financial aid. During the 2022-23 academic year, they said 174,000 undergraduates received \$780 million in need-based federal Pell grants and New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards. They said thanks to this aid, last year, 67% of in-state, full-time undergraduates attended tuition-free and 80% of all CUNY students graduated debt-free.

They said traditionally, students who complete the FAFSA form, which colleges use to calculate financial aid packages, receive decisions about financing options in March. This year, release of the data is delayed because of changes to streamline the form, including efforts to reduce and clarify questions and update the formula to expand eligibility. They said at CUNY, where over a third of undergraduate students come from households that earn less than \$20,000 annually, many students rely on financial aid to attend college.

The university has made available an online Financial Aid Estimator (https://npc.cuny.edu/npc/public/fin_aid/financial_aid_estimator/FinAidEstimator.jsp) which enables students to estimate their eligibility for grants, loans and scholarships and compare CUNY aid and expenses to other colleges. CUNY is urging all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA form if they have not done so yet. They said in 2023, more than 80,000 gradu-

ating seniors in New York State failed to complete the form.

According to the National College Attainment Network, the high school class of 2022 left about \$3.6 billion in Pell Grants nationwide unclaimed by not completing the FAFSA. To boost completion rates, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul this year introduced legislation requiring graduating high school seniors to complete and submit a FAFSA form.

As part of that effort, CUNY launched a web guide to FAFSA (<https://www.cuny.edu/financial-aid/fafsa/>) and a #FileFAFSA Early social media campaign to spread awareness. They said through its K16 Initiatives College and Career Advising Programs, the university has helped more than 4,000 high school students complete FAFSA forms.

Wu-Tang Clan Calls for Parole Justice for Seniors

Wu-Tang Clan rapper, Shyheim, joined State lawmakers & advocates on Feb. 14 to launch various regional campaigns to push for parole justice for seniors. The

group called for the passage of the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills to bring home those who they say work to uplift the community. Shyheim said, "I'm a rapper who supports RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison). When I was in prison, what bothered me most was how the elders got treated."

He added, "Whatever their health care needs, they got ibuprofen. They made mistakes when they were young, and they are being punished forever. If lawmakers visit them in prison, I'm sure the lawmakers will have a change of heart and pass the Elder Parole and Fair and Timely Parole bills."

Advocates say there are many ways formerly incarcerated New Yorkers work to improve safety for all, serving as credible messengers and violence interrupters, re-entry counselors, peer recovery counselors, small business owners and entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, harm reduction experts, policy change agents and more.

Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, lead Senate sponsor of Elder Parole, said over the last

20 years, the number of incarcerated, elderly New Yorkers has more than doubled, even as the overall prison population has declined. "New Yorkers who have done their time and demonstrated that they have committed to changing their ways, should not be forced to spend the rest of their lives behind bars," he said. "That's why a majority of the State Senate has signed on to my bill to reform our parole system for elderly New Yorkers (\$2423) and guarantee parole hearings for those 55 and older that have served at least 15 years."

Torres Leads Push to Permanently Extend the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) Risk-Sharing Program

Democrat, U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15), is leading an initiative among northeast federal elected officials who are advocating for the permanent extension of the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) Risk-Sharing program. In a letter to Biden administration officials, the group emphasized what they said was the program's critical role in advancing affordable

(continued on page 10)

By SHARIFA ABU-HAMDA & MARCUS JOHNSON

In a Feb. 9 article in New York Crain's Health Pulse, the New York State Health Plan Association released their analysis of the Home Care Savings and Reinvestment Act, a bill proposing to eliminate Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) plans and move payment of home care services for seniors and people with disabilities to a fee-for-service arrangement. The week prior, advocates of the legislation touted \$3 billion in savings if the bill were enacted.

Neither group mentioned the consumers of these services. In all the talk of the bloated profits of MLTC, and the savings from moving homecare services to fee-for-service, no one has explained how this legislation will be better for consumers of home care services. Presumably, the savings will be reinvested in home care, and we will benefit from those reinvested dollars. This plan sounds like trickle-down economics to us, and we all know how well that works for the people on the bottom.

As consumers of home care services, we have no fancy lawyers or lobbyists; all we have is decades of experience living in the community with physical disabilities. Let us clarify – we rely on homecare workers and believe they should be compensated fairly for their critical roles. We have experience with both Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) and fee-for-service; both systems have challenges.

The legislation vilifies MLTCs for cutting services and reaping enormous profits. Still, the New York State Department of Health can require MLTCs to provide appropriate services and limit their profits; they currently don't. The union is focused on workers, the plans contest the savings, and the providers are focused on their rates.

We are concerned about how we will get needed services and how many hoops we must jump through to secure them. Our community already faces huge health disparities and early deaths due to the unnecessarily complex healthcare system. As one of our colleagues often says, "Being disabled can be a full-time

Opinion

How Does the Home Care Savings & Reinvestment Act Support the Complex Needs Of People With Disabilities?

job."

We have seen consistent efforts by the New York State Department of Health to cut services to people with disabilities. They closed the Independence Care System (ICS), the only MLTC plan designed to meet our needs, thinking they could save money by forcing us to a larger MLTC plan. The savings were not realized. The alternative to homecare service is costlier nursing home institutionalization or death.

We live by the motto that our lives are not complex, the system is. The legislation proposes to eliminate MLTC and make homecare a fee-for-service. It does not address how people like us will get other services currently authorized by our MLTC, like access to our wheelchairs (complex rehab technology) and medical supplies like catheters needed to remain independent.

Getting these services via a fee-for-service arrangement was extremely difficult. With MLTC care coordination, getting a new wheelchair takes many months. We can only imagine how much longer it will take without the advocacy of a care manager.

Other services in the MLTC benefit package, like social adult day care, designed to address depression and lone-

liness, so prevalent in our community, are not funded anywhere else. The Surgeon General recently recognized loneliness as a health crisis. Our population is more likely to live alone, have difficulty accessing transportation and finding accessible facilities, leading to higher-than-average levels of loneliness.

What will happen to SADC [social adult day care] if the legislation passes? No one knows. The answer to "What comes after MLTC?" is, at best, vague, and there is no guarantee that consumers and consumer advocates will have a seat at the table when a new system is designed.

One proposed solution is to replace the MLTC care coordination with Health Homes. While these organizations are good at providing Care Coordination services, the most recent New York State budget proposed a \$125 million cut to the program, the third year of significant cuts. We worry that these programs will not be adequately funded to do a good job.

The landmark Olmstead decision by the Supreme Court solidified our right to live in the community. Still, progress will only come from ensuring that those impacted have a seat at the decision-making table. This isn't merely about token representation or checking boxes; it's about fundamentally shifting power dynamics to center on the voices with the most to lose.

By embracing consumer expertise and ensuring their active involvement in decision-making processes, we can create a more responsive and inclusive system that promotes genuine empowerment and autonomy for individuals with disabilities. After all, it's our lives and our futures that are at stake.

Sharifa Abu-Hamda and Marcus Johnson are co-leaders of the Civics League for Disability Rights, an independent, volunteer-led group of New Yorkers with disabilities who advocate for themselves, their community, and for change in the healthcare system for people with physical disabilities. To learn more about the Civics League, email civicsleague@gmail.com.

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY

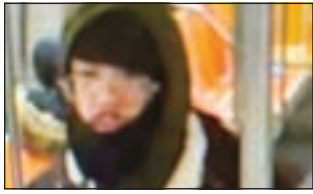


Photo courtesy of the NYPD

THE NYPD HAD been asking for the public's assistance identifying the person seen in this photo, along with others, who they said were wanted for questioning in connection with a murder aboard the D train at 182nd-183rd Street in Fordham Heights on Friday morning, Feb. 23, 2024.

Three Bedford Park Residents Arrested for D Train Killing

Police said three Bedford Park residents have been charged with murder following the killing of Williams "Al" Alvarez, 45, from Parkchester aboard the D train in the early hours of Friday, Feb. 23. Cops had been asking for the public's help identifying three people caught on MTA surveillance video who were sought in connection with what appears to have been a random killing that tragically occurred amid a dispute on the D train at 182nd-183rd Street subway station in Fordham Heights.

Police said there were witnesses to the fatal assault during which Alvarez, who was later described by a neighbor as "rough," was allegedly assaulted by the three suspects and shot. They said the cameras aboard the train were hugely instrumental in identifying the suspects.

On Sunday, Feb. 25, police named the three people as Justin Herde, 24, of East 205th Street, Betty Cotto, 38, of nearby Villa Avenue and Alfredo Trinidad, 42, also of Villa Avenue were each charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon. All three are presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Fordham Manor: Two Sought for Armed Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the people seen in the photo top right who they say are sought in connection with an armed robbery that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Sunday, Feb. 18, at around 1.45 p.m., two male victims aged 47 and 39 were walking in the vicinity of Grand Concourse and



East Kingsbridge Road when they were approached by two people. "Acting in concert, the individuals displayed a knife and forcibly removed the victim's wallets and approximately \$110 in cash," police said. "The individuals were last seen fleeing on foot westbound on East 193 Street towards Jerome Avenue." They said the victims were uninjured and the two people sought are described as male, each with a heavy build.

Norwood: Man Arrested for Facial Wound

The NYPD said a 36-year-old man who had been sought for an assault in Norwood has been arrested. They said that on Monday, Feb. 19, at around 7.30 p.m., in front of 3090 Decatur Avenue, an unidentified individual approached a 17-year-old male and got into a verbal dispute with him. They said as the dispute escalated, the assailant struck the victim in the left side of his face with an unknown sharp object causing a laceration. They said the suspect then fled on foot towards Mosholu Parkway North and the victim was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

Pursuant to an ongoing investigation, police said Edwin Cordero of 353 East Mosholu Parkway North was arrested on Feb. 28. They said he was charged with two counts of assault and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon. He is presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Bedford Park: Man Sought after Woman Assaulted

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person who they say is sought in connection with an assault on an elderly person on the border of Bedford Park and Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Monday, Feb. 19, at around 11.30 a.m. in front of 2880 Jerome Avenue, a man approached a 67-year-old woman and struck her in the face with his elbow.

They said the man then fled on foot northbound along Je-

rome Avenue and the victim refused medical attention. Police said he is described as male, was last seen wearing gold glasses, a blue/black knit hat, and an orange winter coat.



Kingsbridge: Group Sought for Assault & Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is a member of a group sought in connection to a robbery that occurred in Kingsbridge. Police said that on Saturday, Jan. 20, at around 1.15 p.m., when a 21-year-old male victim met another male at West 238th Street and Putnam Avenue West to sell his luxury watches, two additional males also approached them and displayed a gun.

They said one of the two pistol-whipped the victim in the face, and the group then stole two watches from him, valued at approximately \$6,000. Police said the group then fled in a gray Nissan Altima, traveling westbound on West 238th Street. They said the victim sustained minor injuries and refused medical attention, and three sought individuals are described as male, each with medium complexions.

Fordham Heights Gang Assault

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying top right photos who they say are wanted in connection with an assault that occurred in broad day-

light in Fordham Heights. Police said that on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at around 3.50 p.m., a 33-year-old male victim was on the northbound 4 train approaching the Jerome Avenue and West 183rd Street subway station when a group of individuals approached him and repeatedly punched him in the head. They said the group subsequently fled on foot westbound on 183rd Street to parts unknown. Police said the victim refused medical attention at the scene.



Bedford Park: Four Sought for Armed Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos below who they say are sought in connection to an armed robbery that occurred in Bedford Park. Police said that on Monday, March 4, at around 4.20 a.m., a 50-year-old male victim was approached by four males in the vicinity of Jerome Avenue and Risse Street. They said the group displayed a knife and stole the victim's 2022 Toyota Highlander, debit card, and cellphone. They said they then fled northbound on Jerome Avenue to parts unknown. "There

are no injuries reported," police said.

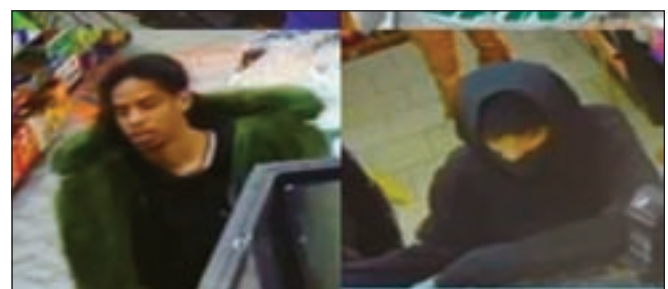
Fordham Heights: Two Cops Injured on Morris Avenue

Two police officers from the 46th Precinct suffered minor injuries after a foot pursuit of a suspect in Fordham Heights on Thursday, Feb. 15, police said. NYPD officials said the incident began at 7:29 a.m. when two officers began to pursue a fleeing suspect they believed to be in possession of a firearm in the vicinity of 2407 Morris Avenue, between East Fordham Road and East 184th Street.

During the foot chase, one officer suffered a minor laceration to a finger and the second officer suffered a small laceration to the right hand that was cut on broken glass. Police report there were no arrests in the incident and no description of the suspect was immediately available.

Later, on the week commencing Feb. 25, while conducting a car stop, officers from the 46th Precinct discovered that a driver's license belonging to the driver of a vehicle was suspended. Upon further investigation, they recovered three kilograms of alleged cocaine, over \$82,000 cash, and a loaded firearm.

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.nypd-online.org/>, on Twitter @NYPD-Tips. All calls are strictly confidential.





VIOLENCE INTERVENTION & PREVENTION (VIP) PROGRAM

975 Kelly Street Suite 401 Bronx, NY 10459

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Elder Abuse, the mistreatment or harming of an older person, is an injustice that we all need to prevent and address.



- Physical
- Emotional/ Psychological
- Financial
- Sexual
- Neglect

FACTS ABOUT ELDER ABUSE

- About 1 in 10 Americans age 60+ have experienced abuse.
- Without decent health care and public resources, our population becomes more at risk for abuse as we age.
- The impact of elder abuse is felt by people of all ages.
- Elder abuse also reduces older people's participation in the life of our communities.
- Elder abuse creates health care and legal costs that are often carried by public programs like Medicare and Medicaid.



ABOUT US

We provide FREE services and supports designed to promote elder justice by helping them to navigate systems and ensure their safety within the home and their community.



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PROGRAMA DE INTERVENCIÓN Y PREVENCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA (VIP)

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¿QUÉ ES EL ABUSO DE ANCIANOS?

Abuso de ancianos, el maltrato o daño a una persona mayor, es una injusticia que todos debemos prevenir y ayudar.



- Físico
- Emocional/Psicológico
- Financiero
- Sexual
- Negligencia

DATOS SOBRE EL ABUSO DE ANCIANOS

- Aproximadamente 1 de cada 10 adultos mayores de 60 años ha experimentado abuso.
- Sin atención médica decente y recursos públicos, nuestra población corre más riesgo de abuso a medida que envejece.
- El impacto del abuso de ancianos lo sienten personas de todas las edades.
- El abuso de ancianos también reduce la participación de las personas mayores en la vida de nuestras comunidades.
- El abuso de ancianos genera costos legales y de atención de la salud que a menudo corren a cargo de programas públicos como Medicare y Medicaid.



SOBRE NOSOTROS

Ofrecemos servicios y apoyo GRATUITO diseñado en promoción de la justicia para personas mayores, ayudándolos a navegar los sistemas y seguridad en su hogar y su comunidad



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Letters To The Editor

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

Student Loan Forgiveness

U.S. President Joe Biden's latest executive order, which would forgive the first \$10,000 in outstanding college loans, benefiting 150,000 borrowers is unfair to those who paid their way. This would add another \$1.2 billion to the previous \$138 billion in previous loan forgiveness he has approved. TANSTAAFL (There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch) or in this case, a student loan. Too many elected officials promise "so called" free stuff from Washington. There are millions of American parents who saved and sacrificed to put their children through college. Many students worked at part time jobs to attend college. Others worked full-time during the day to afford attending undergraduate, graduate, or law school classes at night.

Some first attended less expensive community colleges and later transferred to four-year colleges. Millions benefited from being able to attend college on student loans. This has given them access to the middle class. How many students then stuck Uncle Sam with the bill? Despite being employed for years in well-paying jobs, several hundred thousand former students with ample income refuse to pay off their student loans. Taxpayers are left with billions of dollars in uncollected debts. Biden wanted Washington D.C. to

just write off several hundred billion in outstanding student loan debt.

Colleges and universities that are tax exempt have endowments worth over \$800 billion. Why doesn't Biden ever ask them to contribute, reducing their own graduating students' debt instead of asking taxpayers? It was previously estimated that full implementation of Biden's forgiveness program would have cost taxpayers \$400 billion over the next ten years. Collecting some of these outstanding debts from those who can easily afford them is only fair. Uncle Sam faces \$34.3 trillion in long-term debt. Why not deny federal and state tax refunds to those deadbeats holding good-paying jobs who look for a free ride at our expense? The White House and Congress can introduce appropriate legislation to assist in collecting these outstanding debts from those who can afford to pay.

**Larry Penner
Great Neck**

Re Larry Penner's Letter on Federal Assistance for New York City

The author provides absolutely no detail as to the imbalance of tax dollars between New York City and New York State, and Washington D.C., no figures, no clue as to unfunded mandates, absolutely nothing. Has the author given a thought as to the complexities involved with turning New York City into a State? It would take an act of Congress and the Senate.

The author has written opinion piece

after opinion piece as to how gridlocked our government is. Assuming for the sake of argument such legislation could be passed, it would take an inconceivable number of man hours, and thus an inconceivable amount of money, to establish New York City as a State. I could fill ten pages of this newspaper listing logistical issues, but here are the highlights.

A name would be needed for the new state, a constitution would need to be drafted, a set of consolidated laws and court acts passed, legislators appointed and/or elected, a capital chosen, and a taxation structure put into place. There would still be federal mandates, and money would have to go to the federal government.

Whatever money would be saved turning New York City into a state in the long term would probably be spent tenfold, but since the author provides no details, it is utterly impossible to state with certainty.

**Nat Weiner,
Parkchester**

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.

NEWS BRIEFS

(continued from page 7)

housing goals and stimulating economic growth.

They said the FFB Risk-Sharing Program, established in 2014, has proven to be an effective tool in closing funding gaps in the private markets and facilitating affordable housing production. Since its inception, they said the program has closed or committed \$4.9 billion in loans, supporting the financing of 42,000 housing units.

Despite its proven track record, the group said the FFB Risk-Sharing program is scheduled to close for new applications after Sept. 30. Torres said the impending closure threatens to eliminate a vital source of low-cost capital for affordable housing developers, making it even more challenging to close the housing gap. He said the National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that the U.S. is currently short 7.3 million affordable and available units for the lowest-income Americans.

The group said U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge's endorsement of extending the program during a recent hearing highlights the program's support from the Biden administration and its potential to drive economic activity and job creation.

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Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

Ahead of St. Patrick's Day on March 17, Woodlawn Conservancy is holding an Irish Heritage Trolley Tour led by historian and author Kevin Fitzpatrick on Saturday, March 9, at 2 p.m. In commemoration of Woodlawn's Irish and Irish Americans, the tour will take visitors to the monuments of stars of stage and screen as well as other notables. There will be singing on the Trolley. For tickets, visit <https://www.woodlawn.org/conservancy/tours-events/>.

The Bronx Museum presents the Bronx Museum Auction on March 18, with cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner and auction at 7 p.m. and dessert and dancing at 9 p.m. at Ziegfeld Ballroom, 141 West 54th Street in Manhattan, with Gala Honorees, Sanford Biggers, recipient of the Art & Social Justice Award, Samara

Joy, recipient of the Visionary Aware. For more information contact development@bronxmuseum.org.

The Office of Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson & partners are hosting a Women's History Month Celebration on Wednesday, March 20, at 5.30 p.m. at the Grand Slam Banquet Hall at 478 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx. To RSVP, email events@bronxbp.nyc.gov.

ART

Join En Foco and The BxArts Factory as they present The Story Unveiled: Illuminating Womxn's Narratives, an exhibition hosted at The BxArts Factory, 240 East 153rd Street, Bronx, NY 10451 from March 7 - March 31, 2024, with an opening reception on Thursday, March 7, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, visit eventbrite.com.

MUSIC

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

Forever Freestyle 16 on Saturday, March 16, at 8 p.m. with performances by TKA, George Lamond, Judy Torres, Noel, Safire, Betty D Of Sweet Sensation, Cynthia, Coro, The Cover Girls, C-Bank, and Two Without Hats. The event will be hosted by Sal Abbatiello and Speedy, with music by DJ Lucho and DJ WhiteBoy KYS. Visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/freestyle-16> for more information and to buy tickets.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A photo exhibition on "Jewish Identity/Jewish Diversity" is ongoing at Hostos Research Center, Hostos Community College, 450 Grand Concourse, C-130, Bronx, 10451. The exhibition, which will be open through May 2, 2024, is part of the multi-year CUNY Anti-Hate Initiative, aimed at educating the CUNY community about diverse groups' identities and experiences. This year focuses on Jewish and Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islanders. Next year, the initiative will spotlight Black/African American

and Hispanic/Latinx demographics, followed by Muslims and the LGBTQIA+ groups in the third year. The exhibit is made possible through the generous support of Hostos Community College, the CUNY Anti-Hate Initiative, and The Covenant Foundation. Visit <https://www.hostos.cuny.edu/> for more information.

MOVEMENT

Van Cortlandt Track Club is hosting a 5k in Van Cortlandt Park on March 9 to support the Friendly Fridge initiative. Sign up at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Info/NY/Bronx/LettuceRun5K>. NYC Parks recreation centers offer a host of free programs, including sporting activities all year long. Recreation Center Membership is free for youth and young adults ages 24 and under. For more information visit nyc.gov/parks. Contact accessibility@parks.nyc.gov or (212) 360-1430 for more information regarding accessibility.

Fire Kills One in "Illegally Subdivided" Home

By DAVID GREENE, SÍLE MOLONEY & MIRIAM QUINONES

One male person has died following a fatal fire in a residential home in Fordham Manor on Friday afternoon, FDNY officials said. The age or approximate age of the victim was not immediately available.

The fire department said they received a call at 2.08 p.m. on Friday, March 1, for reports of a fire at 2533 Grand Avenue, a three-story residential home located between West 190th Street and West 192nd Street. They said the fire was reported on the 2nd floor, with extension to the 3rd floor.

One person was found deceased upon arrival of firefighters at the scene, FDNY officials said and added that one firefighter was treated for minor injuries. They said the fire was brought under control at 4.49 p.m. and fire marshals are investigating the cause and origin.

Frederic Klein, regional communications manager for the Red Cross, later said of the incident, "Our hearts and thoughts go out to the family, friends, and neighbors of those impacted by the fire on Grand Avenue in The Bronx." He said following the fire, the American Red Cross registered 8 households (comprising 14 individuals) for emergency assistance, including temporary lodging and financial assistance.

"Red Cross caseworkers will reach

out to these residents in [the] coming days to connect them with non-profit and/or government resources to assist with longer-term recovery needs," Klein said. "Any residents affected by this fire who were not able to connect with the Red Cross on scene and who need help with their recovery should call 877-RED CROSS (877-733-2767)."

Yellow tape blocked off both ends of Grand Avenue, a pretty narrow residential street with cars parked on either side. Police cars were seen at each corner. One male resident told Norwood News at one point smoke from the fire could be smelled all the way down at Kingbridge Road, a block and a half away.

Another female resident of the area said she hoped she could get through the blocked off section soon because she had just picked up her kids from school and wanted to get home. A helicopter was seen circling over the area at one point. One media outlet reported that the home was "illegally subdivided." *Norwood News* followed up with NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) and Andrew Rudansky, DOB press secretary, responded, saying, DOB was called to the scene to conduct a structural stability inspection of the building following a fire.

"Upon our arrival to the scene, our inspectors observed severe fire damage throughout the building, with most of the damage concentrated in the rear



Photo by David Greene

A TOWER LADDER rests on the second floor of a three-family home at 2533 Grand Avenue in Fordham Manor destroyed by a fire on Friday afternoon, March 1, 2024, claiming the life of one still-unidentified male.

of the structure," Rudansky said. "During their inspection of the building, our inspectors found that the single-family home had been illegally converted into a total of seventeen (17) Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, located on all levels of the building, including both the cellar and the attic."

Rudansky said that as a result of the severe fire damage throughout the Building, DOB issued a Full Vacate Order, and ordered the property owner to board up the building. He confirmed that all residents who had been displaced by the fire were offered emergency relocation assistance by American Red Cross. "DOB's investigation is ongoing," he said. "Additional enforcement actions are pending that investigation."

The NYPD was seen guarding the site of the fire late on Friday night. We

reached out to ask if the site was being treated as a potential crime scene and will share any updates we receive.

Norwood News spoke to several residents of the street later on Friday but nobody knew the families living in the affected building and had not been home when the fire broke out.

As above, the cause of the fire is still under investigation. Earlier this week, New York City Council voted to pass more e-bike safety rules to address the dangers of fires caused by lithium-ion batteries.

One man died in a three-alarm residential fire on Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor in mid-November last year. A full list of educational materials on lithium-ion batteries can be found at fdnysmart.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Bronx Week Vendor Deadline

Applications are open for vendors during Bronx Week on the Grand Concourse by Yankee Stadium. Join the vibrant intersection of vendors at 161st Street and Grand Concourse for Bronx Week 2024. Apply using the following link: https://www.cognitofirms.com/MASCHospitalityGroup/TheBronxWeek?mc_cid=e42374ae2b&mc_eid=4160a56007

The **Bronx Night Market** will return to Fordham Plaza on April 6, at 4 p.m. The Bronx Night Market is not merely a culinary gathering; it is a powerful reflection of the community's resilience, creativity, and collective pride, contributing to the borough's cultural richness and economic vibrancy. This special event will occur on the first Saturday of the month from April to October. Visit <https://www.maschospitalitygroup.com/bronxnightmarket> for more information and to apply as a vendor.

Deadline Extended to Join Local Community Board

The Community Board application period is still live, and the Office of the Bronx Borough President is encouraging eligible candidates, 16 years or older, to apply to have a say in their community. They say joining a local community board is one of the most direct forms of democracy in New York City

and can have a tremendous impact on a neighborhood. To apply before March 8 at 11.59 p.m., in English or in Spanish, visit <https://form.jotform.com/nyc/cb/2024-bronx-community-boards>.

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>.

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:

- 3001 Grand Concourse, with a deadline of April 3
- 710-714 East 215th Street, with a deadline of March 12
- 1140 Grant Avenue, with a deadline of April 1
- 1120 Nelson Avenue, with a deadline of March 8.
- 3103 Sedgwick Avenue, with a deadline of March 22

HPD frequently extends the announced deadlines. Visit <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/search-lotteries> for more information.

Bronx Higher Education College Fair

In partnership with our Bronx Higher Education Task Force, the Office of the Bronx Borough President is hosting a Bronx Higher Education College Fair on March 7 at Bronx Community College. Perspective students will speak to representatives from various Bronx colleges and universities, obtain information on financial aid and scholarships, and learn more about workforce development and degree programs. Register at https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=SZq9UmV1jEe8Qnf9cOtdxD4UVuwLRKx-Io07uQ_a7v8BUN1hNTkxFOFRKU1g-zOE5ZSJnLMjY0VvVhDNS4u.

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 Mosholu Parkway North, and on East 211th Street between Hull Avenue and Perry Avenue in Norwood.

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/page/register-vote> to register to change party affiliation.

Veterans Food Pantry Opens

A Veterans Food Pantry has opened at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, located at 130 W Kingsbridge Rd, Bronx, NY 10468. Call the Center for Development & Civic Engagement on (718) 584 9000 Ext 5475 to schedule a pick-up time and date.

Coffee with a Cop

Have a coffee with a cop from the 52nd Precinct on Thursday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to noon, at Starbucks, 3396 Jerome Avenue in Norwood.

Grant Cycle Open

RTW Charitable Foundation aims to build partnerships with local organizations to advance health equity in New York City. Organizations that seek to address the gaps in care for communities of color, low-income families, recent immigrants, and other underserved populations are invited to submit a Letter of Intent for funding in the 2024 grant cycle by April 15. Visit <https://www.tfaforms.com/5108302> for more information.

Disability Advisory Council Event

The Office of the Bronx Borough President and partners are hosting a Disability Advisory Council event on Monday, March 11, at 11 a.m. at Bronx Borough Hall, 851 Grand Concourse, Bronx. Learn about inclusivity and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Email mmatos@bronxbp.nyc.gov for more information or call Millicent Matos on (929) 286 0160.

Summer Youth Employment Program Deadline Extended

The deadline to apply for the Summer Youth Employment Program has been extended to March 15. Apply today at application.nycsyep.com or call 1800 246 4646.

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Applications Open for People's Choice Award

(continued from page 6)

Since its inception in 1997, the Bronx Walk of Fame has provided a platform for Bronx natives and those closely connected to the borough to be celebrated for their work and contributions to their respective industries.

Nominations for the People's Choice Award in Healthcare are being accepted through Monday, March 25 at 5:00 p.m. To be eligible, nominees must have ei-

ther been born in The Bronx or have strong ties to the borough. Furthermore, they must have surpassed expectations in their roles, made substantial contributions to healthcare in The Bronx, and showcased a commitment to community health, wellness, and healthcare education. To nominate your pick, visit: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzbivDIYx0qr6atfrYWc178tccV0DOOEaICcv4kiSIM7g-Mg/view-form>

James' heart failure reversal is one for the record books.

"I don't know that I ever would've survived if I wasn't at Montefiore Einstein."

— James Bradley

When former White Plains Deputy Police Commissioner James Bradley suffered two massive back-to-back heart attacks, the specialists at Montefiore Einstein saved his life by implanting a mechanical support system called an LVAD. What happened next was a heart failure reversal for the record books. His team did what few have the expertise to do, they removed the LVAD, and James' heart continued to function well without needing a transplant.

See James' heart failure reversal story at montefiore.org/James



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Public and Community Meetings

The 52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of the month at different locations, either in person or online. 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, March 26, at 6.30 p.m. at Monroe College, Kings Hall, Mintz Auditorium, 2501 Jerome Ave., 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 [executive] meeting will be held in April [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, April 3, 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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DIVISION OF BRIDGES INVITATION FOR BIDS

PROTECTIVE COATING OF MACOMBS DAM BRIDGE
Boroughs of Manhattan and The Bronx
Contract No. HB1070MD
NYCPIN: 84123MBBR607
EPIN: 84123B0034

EPIN: 84123B0034-PIN: 84123MBBR607-Protective Coating of Macombs Dam Bridge, in the Boroughs of Manhattan and The Bronx. This Competitive Sealed Bid (CSB) is being released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this CSB must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the solicitation, 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 quickly locate the CSB, insert the EPIN: **84123B0034**, into the Keywords 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.

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed by email to agency contact nkumar@dot.nyc.gov, under the subject line EPIN: 84123B0034.

A pre-bid conference via ZOOM is scheduled for 03/18/2024 at 10:00 am. Those wishing to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link. Optional field visit is scheduled on 03/20/2024 at 2:00PM in the intersection of 155th Street and St. Nicholas Place in Manhattan.

The deadline for the submission of questions is 03/25/2024 by 4:00 pm.

The bid due date (submission via PASSPort) as well as hard copy as instructed is due 4/17/2024 by 11:00 am.

Bid opening date via ZOOM is 4/17/2024 at 12:00 pm.

This procurement is subject to M/WBE participation goals, the M/WBE goals for this project are 30%.

As-Built Drawings will be available upon request from the Contractors. Contractors need to sign Confidentiality agreement to view As-built drawings.

Eric Adams, Mayor
Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

Feds Bust 16 Drug Traffickers

(continued from page 1)

He said this included multiple shootings and said the blocks in question were those between East 194th Street and East 196th Street on Valentine Avenue.

Norwood News spoke to some residents of the block on March 6 but none were aware of the raid. One woman said she sometimes saw police patrolling the two ends of the section in question of Valentine Avenue, as well as midway between the two. A local store owner said the same thing.

Williams said the latest charges are a continuation of ongoing work by law enforcement to address gang activity on Valentine Avenue and added that since 2020, federal, State and City law enforcement have arrested and charged over 50 defendants with serious drug and gun crimes, all carried out along the same stretch of the avenue. The names of the 16 people charged in the latest raid had not been released as of press date.

In June 2022, the FBI announced that 12 people had been arrested and charged with drug trafficking and criminal weapons possession following a raid at 2685 Valentine Avenue.

Zukeila Plaza, aka "Keila" (40), Maurice Sinclair, aka "Skino," aka "Ski" (26), Lawrence Green, aka "Lzz," aka "LJ" (28), Louis Lawrence, aka "Adam," aka "Anthony," aka "A" (32), Deion Johnson, aka "Billz," aka "Black" (25), Nathan Smith, aka "Youngin," aka "600," aka "Six" (24), Estiben Oliva, aka "Mula" (28), John Graves, aka "Nephew" (35), Ali Doby, aka "Lee Drilly," aka "Fifty" (20), Goddess Earl, aka "Asia" (49), Javon Hoskins, aka "Jason," aka "Twin" (41), and John Hendricks, aka "Tyson," aka "Fred" (56), all of New York City, were charged with being members of a drug trafficking organization.

It was alleged by federal prosecutors that the group distributed drugs, including crack cocaine, fentanyl, and heroin in The Bronx, including from inside 2685 Valentine Avenue from March 2019 through June 2022. Norwood News asked the press office at the federal prosecutors' office for an update on the status of the legal cases pending against these formerly charged and named 12 individuals. We had not received an update as of press date.

Norwood News has long reported on several violent incidents occurring on the impacted stretch of Valentine



Image courtesy of U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY FOR the Southern District of New York, Damian Williams, announces charges on March 6, 2024, against 16 people for criminal gun possession and for operating a drug trafficking ring on Valentine Avenue between East 194th Street and East 196th Street in Fordham Manor over several years.

Avenue, as well as on prior anti-gun violence marches organized on the blocks in question, led by Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark.

A stabbing was reported in front of 2527 Valentine Avenue between East 196th Street and East Fordham Road on April 18, 2023. A 25-year-old local man was arrested for attempted murder and other charges following a daylight shooting at Valentine Avenue and East 197th Street on April 15, 2023.

In April 2015, Hakeem Kuta, a 17-year-old Mott Haven teen, jumped from a rooftop at 2685 Valentine Avenue between East 194th Street and East 196th Street as he attempted to evade police who were pursuing him for allegedly smoking marijuana in a lobby with others, after receiving a complaint. He was transported to St. Barnabas Hospital and later died from his injuries.

Other violent incidents have also been reported in the wider vicinity of Valentine Avenue. These include when an innocent little girl who became affectionately known as "Baby Catherine," was shot in the face in crossfire when she was just 11 months old at Valentine Avenue and East 198th Street on Jan. 19, 2022. She survived. More recently, a mother was fatally shot and two of her children were also shot but survived during an incident inside 226 East 203rd Street and Valentine Avenue on Feb. 10, this year.

The NYPD said they have removed 1034 illegal guns off New York City streets as of March 5, since the beginning of the year, and 14,624 illegal guns since Jan. 1, 2022. Despite this, year-to-date shootings in the borough and in the 52nd Precinct, where the raid occurred,

ers who also congregate underneath the nearby Kingsbridge Road underpass and by nearby Poe Park. A mobile police security camera was seen near that junction on the evening of March 6.

As reported, residents and educators in the area, especially around Poe Park, have long complained about the prevalence of open [outdoor] drug use. Many agree services are needed to assist those with addiction issues but have called for such services to be provided at a venue located away from young children who are habitually witnessing, at very close proximity, the effects of such open, outdoor drug use in plain sight.

P.S. 246 is located diagonally across from Poe Park.

Meanwhile, Williams said of the latest arrests, "We have now dismantled three different crews. He added that they were not done. "As U.S. Attorney, I promise you we are not going to abandon any of our communities. Our commitment to public safety will never waiver, not anywhere, not for a moment. The people of this great city deserve nothing less."

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

**David Greene contributed to this story.*



Photo by Silé Moloney

GRAFFITI AND SYMBOLS possibly indicative of gang affiliation is seen on a street structure along Valentine Avenue on March 6, 2024.

Patrol Borough: Bronx Precinct: All

CompStat Book

Week of 02/26/24 - 03/03/24

		28 Day			Year to Date		
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	-100.0 %	6	9	-33.3 %	14	20	-30.0 %
Rape	100.0 %	30	29	3.4 %	69	65	6.2 %
Robbery	25.4 %	304	279	9.0 %	811	714	13.6 %
Felony Assault	17.9 %	535	522	2.5 %	1,241	1,186	4.6 %
Burglary	73.0 %	239	222	7.7 %	492	508	-3.1 %
Grand Larceny	14.9 %	622	528	17.8 %	1,507	1,202	25.4 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-21.6 %	297	400	-25.8 %	681	916	-24.6 %
Total	16.1 %	2,033	1,989	2.2 %	4,825	4,611	4.6 %
Patrol	16.3 %	1,888	1,842	2.5 %	4,479	4,282	4.6 %
Transit	133.3 %	34	26	30.8 %	72	41	75.6 %
Housing	0.0 %	111	121	-8.3 %	274	288	-4.9 %
Shooting Victims	50.0 %	33	23	43.5 %	63	50	26.0 %
Shooting Incidents	50.0 %	23	18	27.8 %	48	40	20.0 %
UCR Rape*	-16.7 %	46	49	-6.1 %	113	111	1.8 %
Other Sex Crimes	-26.1 %	69	77	-10.4 %	160	186	-14.0 %

- All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17.

- Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law ("NYSPL") definitions.

* Uniformed Crime Reporting ("UCR") Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape

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 - Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law ("NYSPL") definitions.
 * Uniformed Crime Reporting ("UCR") Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape

Source: NYPD

MAJOR CRIMES IN The Bronx for the 28-day period ending March 3, 2024, as well as year-to-date major crimes as of the same date, compared to the same timeframe in 2023.

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