



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## ORCHID SHOW STUNS AT NYBG



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**“THE ORCHID SHOW: Florals in Fashion,”** seen here on April 6, 2024, is on display at the New York Botanical Garden through April 21, 2024.

### By SÍLE MOLONEY

“The Orchid Show: Florals in Fashion” brings the catwalk to the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory at Bedford Park’s New York Botanical Garden in a fashion-inspired celebration of all things orchid. At-

tendees are treated to bold, new, orchid-inspired designs, displayed on standing mannequins, created by New York’s rising stars of the stitch. These include the dramatic, picture-perfect floral displays of Colina Strada by Hillary Tay-

mour, Dauphinette by Olivia Cheng, and FLWR PSTL by Kristen Alpaugh.

Representatives of the Garden said, “This is your chance to ‘walk the runway’ and show off your own personal flair, your love for orchids, and your

fashion-forward connections to the natural world, because florals are always *en vogue* at NYBG.”

According to Taymour, Colina Strada isn’t just a fashion label, it’s also a platform for

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Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**MEMBERS OF THE NYPD**, the Easter Bunny, and other attendees and organizers pose for a photo at an Easter event hosted by the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct & partners at their Webster Avenue stationhouse in Norwood on Saturday, April 6, 2024.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**KIDS HUNT FOR** Easter Eggs on Mosholu Parkway opposite the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct stationhouse on Webster Avenue in Norwood on Saturday, April 6, 2024.

# Annual Easter Egg Hunts Spread Joy

**By SÍLE MOLONEY, MIRIAM QUIÑONES & ARIEL PACHECO**

A host of Easter celebrations brought much needed joy to local kids in Bronx Community District 7 in recent weeks. The 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, Bronx liaison, Lt. Nelson Bonilla of Bedford Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Care (Never End Love), and local Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80) hosted a successful **Egg Hunt for around 75 people** opposite the Precinct's Webster Avenue stationhouse in Norwood on Saturday, April 6, having rescheduled the event twice beforehand.

The event was coordinated by the Community Affairs team headed by Officer Stephen Echevarria, and Officer Jessalyn Capo, and included games, fun rides in a mini police car, face-painting, photos with the Easter Bunny, food, music and of course, the Egg Hunt itself. A host of sponsors and volunteers joined the effort to ensure its success, and each was later presented with a certificate of appreciation by the NYPD as a token of gratitude.

They included the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Community Council, Auto Sports Five J's Automotive Ltd, Armory Auto Parts & Repairs, Two Ways Driving School, Young One Customs, Braulio Barber-shop, Medi Serve Pharmacy, Xtreme Quality Auto Collision, Mel's Auto

Body, Sonia Ramirez, R.G. Ortiz Funeral Home, and Bedford Mosholu Community Association.

They also included Bronx Community Board 7, Ponce Bank, Guerinos Against Graffiti\*, Crusaders for Children's Rights, Mena Auto Sounds, Metro PCS, Elijah & Jeremy Flores KMF Boxing, Jonathan Quiñones, State of NY Chaplain Federation, Med Troop, ERH Contracting Co., West Farms Welding, Universal Maintenance LLC, and St. Brendan's Church. Local resident, Zoe Pena, daughter of Lisa Pena, wrote a letter to the Precinct's officers, telling them, "Dear Police, I am very grateful because you keep us safe."

NYC Parks and partners had hosted a separate Easter Egg Hunt in the Williamsbridge Oval on March 30. The event was organized by NYC Parks Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center staff, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) sponsored a magic show, Jerome Gun Hill BID provided Easter eggs, and local groups, Guerinos Against Graffiti\* and Crusaders for Children's Rights, organized a life-size Easter Bunny.

The nonprofit, Build On NYC, volunteered their services throughout the day, NYC Parks staff ran the various booths and stations, Ridgewood Savings Bank sponsored prizes and big games, and City Councilmember Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) presented proclamations to

various local honorees, including Build On, the Recreation Center team, and the Oval gardening and maintenance team. Bronx Community Board 7 were also present on the day, sharing information and resources with district residents.

City Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14), Assemblyman George Alvarez (A.D. 78) and the Gardiner Foundation Inc. also held an Easter Egg Hunt in St. James Park on March 30, and on Sunday, March 31, dozens of kids in bunny ears gathered with local nonprofit, Up Life Foundation and partners for another Easter Egg Hunt at the Oval.

That event comprised games, music, treats, and dancing to a live DJ amid a flurry of excitement. Up Life was founded by Robert Salkey after he left prison. He said it was to give back to the community and bring about change. The nonprofit focuses on building up services and resources in urban communities and neighborhoods through programs, special events, and family-friendly activities.

Children's book author, Kevin Grimes Sr., was in attendance and spoke about his free book, "My Daddy Loves Me" which is co-authored with his 7-year-old son, Kevin Grimes Jr. "All your Daddys love you!" Grimes Sr. told kids at the event. "Everyone loves you! Up Life loves you!"



Photo by Síle Moloney

**KIDS COMPETE IN** a potato sack race in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood as part of an Easter event hosted by NYC Parks & partners on Saturday, March 30, 2024.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**DOZENS OF KIDS** gather with local nonprofit, Up Life Foundation, and partners for an Easter Egg Hunt in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood on Sunday, March 31, 2024.



# Lawyer for “Fentanyl” Daycare Owner: “She’s not a Monster”

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Bronx daycare owner, Grei Mendez, appeared in Bronx Criminal Court on Tuesday, April 9. Facing various State charges, following the unintentional death by fentanyl poisoning of one-year-old Nicholas Feliz Dominici at El Niño Divino Daycare Center in Kingsbridge Heights on Sept. 15, 2023, her defense attorney alleges she’s not a monster. As reported, Mendez, 36 at the time of her arrest, has been charged, alongside others, with both State and federal crimes.

Speaking to *Norwood News* after the day’s proceedings, Mendez’ defense attorney, Javier Solano, said in part of Mendez, “She’s not some monster; she’s not. This is a person who’s literally cared for these [people?/inaudible]. She really wanted to do a good job as a daycare worker at the daycare business. She’s a loving mother; every day her heart is breaking. If she could probably give up her life for those kids, she would, in a second.”

As reported, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark previously announced that Mendez and Felix Herrera Garcia, 34, both of 2705 Morris Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, along with Carlisto Brito, 41, of 2707 Morris Avenue, were charged with second-degree murder, first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, second-degree manslaughter, four counts of first-degree assault, five counts of second-degree assault, second, third, and fourth-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, and four counts of endangering the welfare of a child before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Margaret Clancy in October 2023.

According to the investigation, on Sept. 15, 2023, at 2:43 p.m. in an apartment in 2707 Morris Avenue, a licensed daycare, and where Brito resided in a bedroom, four children were poisoned by exposure to fentanyl, resulting in Nicholas’ death and acute opioid intoxication requiring hospital treatment for an 8-month-old baby girl, her 2-year-old brother, and another 2-year-old boy. EMS used Narcan to reverse the symptoms of the brother and sister, but Nicholas died. The other infant boy was treated at the hospital, and also survived.

As reported, a kilo of fentanyl was found in a closet in the daycare apartment, and six kilos of fentanyl, heroin and other controlled substances were found under a trap door in the floor, under a padded mat where children napped. Kilo presses and other drug paraphernalia were found in the apartment. All three defendants were remanded in custody.

Health officials later confirmed the daycare center had passed prior inspections before opening, including at least one unannounced, onsite inspection.

Handcuffed and surrounded by several guards, a tearful Mendez, who Solano said is originally from the Dominican Republic, and who was dressed in a light brown jumpsuit, appeared in court with red eyes and a lowered head for the



Photo by Síle Moloney

**GREI MENDEZ, OPERATOR** of the now closed El Niño Divino Daycare Center, located on Morris Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, where one-year-old Nicholas Feliz Dominici was fatally poisoned on Sept. 15, 2023, appears in Bronx Criminal Court on April 9, 2024.

most part. Some members of her family were also present on the day and Solano said Mendez, who is being detained in federal prison pending her trial, had met with some of them privately before her court appearance.

In addition to Solano, Mendez was accompanied by a Spanish interpreter during her appearance. Mr. [Paul/Karl?] Miller represented the Office of the Bronx District Attorney. Clancy granted permission for media coverage of the proceedings, confirming that neither the defense nor the prosecution had taken a position on the matter. The judge ruled that coverage was to be limited, and courtroom attendees or family members could not be filmed.

She explained that a motion to take a DNA sample [for Mendez] had been filed by the prosecution and the defense had consented to it on the understanding its use would be limited to the case at hand. She said the sample had been granted and the swab had been taken the morning of the trial. The defense concurred.

Clancy went on to say that the federal trial was set for a later date in June, and asked Miller if he had been cross designated [to aid federal prosecutors] in the context of the federal trial. Miller replied, “Not officially,” before adding he expected that would happen. Addressing both attorneys, Clancy then said, “As you know, there’s no way this will go to trial before the federal case.”

Solano replied, “I know that that’s what people say but I don’t know why it shouldn’t. My position, your Honor,

is that we got the discovery from Mr. Miller. I spent the time to go through the discovery. It’s not a complicated case, serious but not complicated, and certainly, since it doesn’t appear that the resolution of that case in federal court is going to resolve this case, frankly, I don’t know why we need to wait but..”

Discovery is the compulsory disclosure by a party to an action of relevant documents referred to by the other party in a legal setting. Clancy said she didn’t disagree, adding, “You’re correct, and I’m happy to put it on for trial before then [the federal case].” However, she said in her experience, witness availability and the scheduling of the defendants to appear in State court would likely be difficult due to the upcoming federal case. “I’ll put it on for a hearing and trial before then, and we’ll see what we can do, but I’m not an optimist,” Clancy said.

Miller said the District Attorney’s stance was to wait for the federal case to be heard. A tentative date for May 21 was agreed for a hearing and trial for the State proceedings. Before the court session ended, in reference to the co-defendants’ cases, Miller said Herrera Garcia was scheduled for a similar DNA swab on April 10, and Brito for a later date in June.

Speaking to *Norwood News* outside the courthouse, Solano then said of Mendez, “Every time you see her, every single day since this has happened, she has been suffering. I understand the pain that the [victim’s] family is going through. In no way am I trying to minimize that in any

way, but you know, people make it seem like she has no emotion, doesn’t care; that’s just not the case.”

We asked Solano about alleged reports that before calling 911, Mendez had allegedly sent some text messages to one of the co-defendants. He replied, “I ask you this question. You have a daycare, and you have kids that are unresponsive. Are you so sure that you would know exactly what you would do at that moment?” *Norwood News* responded, “Call 911.”

Solano said, “You would think so, because you know why? Because right now, you’re not under the pressure of anything. Right now, you’re not completely panicked. Right now, you’re not terrified.” He continued, “And yes, as we stand here, completely clearheaded, yes. The right thing is maybe I should call 911, but under the stress of the event, sometimes people do things differently.”

He said that didn’t necessarily mean that they were intending to do something else, or that they knew of something else. “Just people under pressure, under emergency situations, some people that you think are the strongest, bravest people run the other way,” he said. “Some people that you think are the weakest people go into the fire, into the danger.”

Solano added, “During the trial, when it happens, you’ll see that I’m going to be able to show this jury that she didn’t do anything in terms of who she called, and when she called that contributed to any kind of criminality in this case.”

(continued on page 8)

# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their opinion on the recent solar eclipse and if it lived up to their expectations.



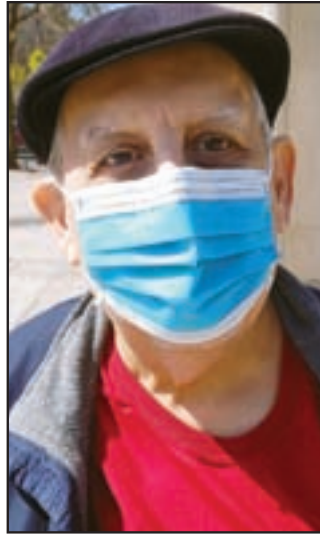
"I saw it right when I got out of class as it first started. The moon was just starting to pass the sun. Then I saw it again when I got off the bus and it was like halfway through, so it took like an hour for the moon to go all the way past the sun. I had my eclipse glasses. It was nice to see."

**Maleeshia Alvaranga,**  
Olinville  
(Photo by David Greene)



"Yeah, I looked at it. I couldn't get the glasses, but I still looked up. I went to the library on Allerton, but they didn't have them. I don't have any pain but I only looked for a quick second because they say if you look at it too long it can do something to your retina. I didn't see anything; that's why I stopped looking."

**Timothy Shelton,**  
Bedford Park  
(Photo by David Greene)



"This eclipse, it didn't get dark. It was no big deal, but like they say, it had a unifying effect and that was a good thing. It's a good thing when people come together like that; to me that's a good thing."

**Gus Guzman,**  
Norwood  
(Photo by David Greene)



"I did get my glasses but unfortunately, by the time I came outside it was at totality. So, I saw it when it was right in the middle, pretty much at totality. I did notice it lasted quite a long time, longer than I expected. I was thinking maybe like 30 seconds, but it felt like it was almost 3 minutes. I know I'm not the only one that said that. Absolutely, it was worth my time getting my glasses at the AMC Theater on 125 Street."

**Jordan River,**  
Norwood  
(Photo by David Greene)



"I watched it from right here in Van Cortlandt Park and I got my glasses from T-Mobile. They gave them out to a lot of people. I watched it with my family. We all had glasses. We saw how beautiful it was as the moon covered 94% of the sun. It was as good as I expected. I think the next one is in 2044; that's what they say for New York. I donated my glasses already, but don't remember to whom."

**Kenny Gee,**  
Kingsbridge Heights  
(Photo by David Greene)



## SMELL GAS? ACT FAST.

If something seems off...

like you **smell** a rotten egg odor, **see** a white cloud, bubbles in water, blowing dust, or dying plants, or if you **hear** a roar, hiss, or whistle—

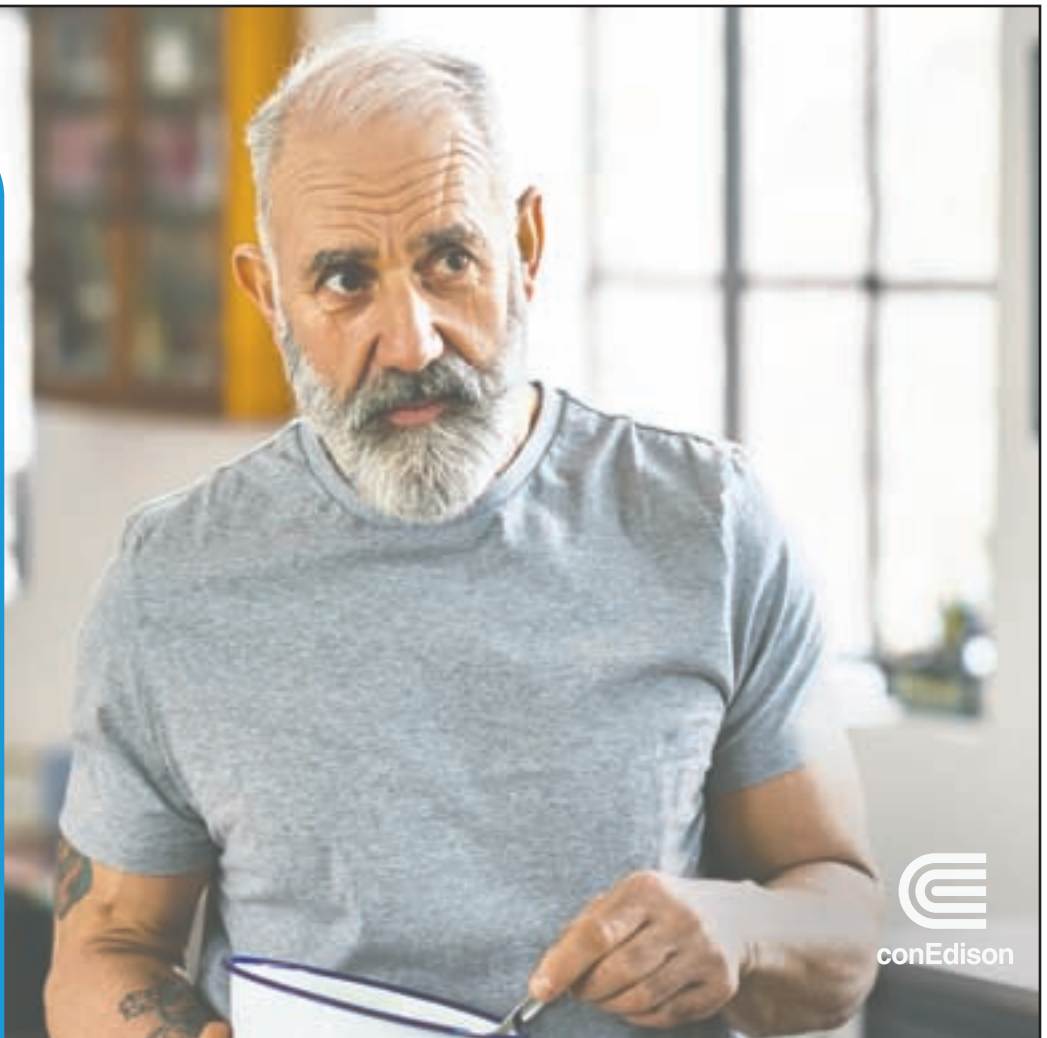
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and take others with you. If the leak is outside, move to a safe spot far away.

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# Illegal Weed Shops Still Open & Being Robbed

By DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY

The NYPD is asking the public for help identifying one of two suspects captured on surveillance video, wanted in connection with a series of armed robberies or attempted robberies of smoke shops located within the borders of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, which covers some or all of Norwood, Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Bronx Park, and University Heights.

Announcing the robberies, the NYPD reported the incidents only as “commercial establishment” robberies/attempted robberies, without specifying they related to smoke shops. According to police, the first incident took place at New Stand Candy, located at 2625 Grand Concourse at East 193rd Street in Fordham Manor at 6.50 p.m. on Thursday, March 21.

Police said an unidentified person approached the store’s tiny, street-level window and displayed a firearm to a 32-year-old male employee. They said the suspect then stole \$3,000 and fled the location on foot, heading northbound on the Grand Concourse. No injuries were reported.

The store sits directly across the street from P.S. 246, located at 2641 Grand Concourse. On Friday, April 5, a female school safety agent at the school told *Norwood News*, “Oh, we’ve called 311 several times about that place and the State Police have shut them down two or three times.”

An attempted robbery was again reported at New Stand Candy at 9.13 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2. Police said a 23-year-old male employee was behind the counter when an unidentified male approached the store’s “drive-through window” and displayed a firearm.

On April 3, the NYPD released a video from the robbery in which a man is seen brandishing a handgun. He quickly tucks the gun inside his pants as he attempts to stop the store’s iron gate from closing when the worker apparently tries to shut remotely. Unable to stop it from closing, the gunman is then seen running away.

Police described the suspect from the April 2 robbery attempt as a male with a medium build and a dark complexion, who was last seen wearing a black jacket, black pants, black and white sneakers, and a black ski mask.

On April 5, after the NYPD released information on the attempted robbery, *Norwood News* spoke to an apparent (male) employee behind the counter of the smoke shop, who said of the incident and his colleague, “They tried to rob him, but he shut the gate.”

The employee was asked if the smoke shop was licensed, as well as the law that stipulates that cannabis shops cannot be located within 500 feet of a public school. The man said the store

was licensed but did not comment on its location.

We also asked the employee about the requirement of the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) for smoke shop operators to place a specific decal/sticker containing a QR code on their storefronts to indicate that the store is licensed, and since no such decal was visible on the storefront. The employee replied, “The boss is going to come and put it on the door.”

The NYPD reported another robbery at Mr. Exotix Smoke Shop, located at 290 East Kingsbridge Road, also in Fordham Manor, at 11.24 a.m. on Wednesday, April 3. Police said the incident occurred across the street from the Bronx Library Center, adding that two unidentified people entered the store, displayed a gun, and demanded cash.

They said the individuals removed \$60, and fled the location on foot, traveling northbound on East Kingsbridge Road towards East 192nd Street. Again, no injuries were reported.

On Friday, April 12, *Norwood News* asked P.S. 246 Principal Andrea Johnson for comment on the part of the law preventing cannabis shops from opening within 500 feet of a school. She replied, “That’s what I thought as well; yes, that’s what I thought.”

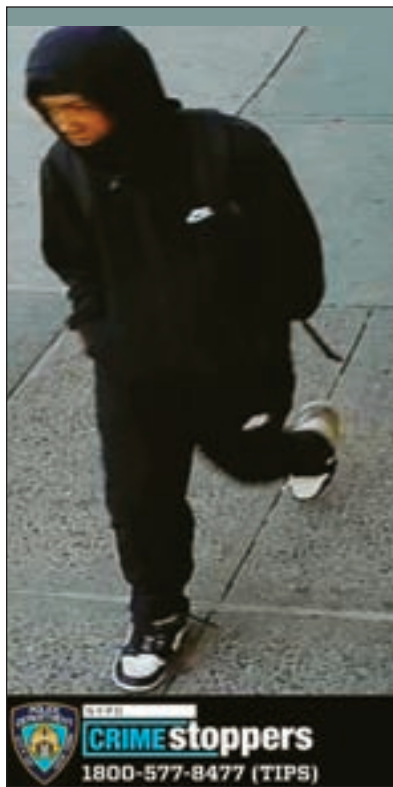


Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**POLICE RELEASED THIS** photo of a suspect wanted in connection with the attempted armed robbery of New Stand Candy smoke shop, located at Grand Concourse and East 193rd Street in Fordham Manor on Tuesday, April 2, 2024.



Photo by David Greene

**NEW STAND CANDY**, a smoke shop located at 2625 Grand Concourse in Fordham Manor, seen here on April 5, 2024, was robbed on March 21, 2024, and again on April 2, 2024. The shop is located across the street from P.S. 246 and was already shut down on two occasions by the New York State Police.

Johnson confirmed the school had made several complaints about the store. We asked if the shop had ever been shut down. She responded, “A couple of times, yes.” Possibly exposing a loophole in the law, she added, “They keep opening with different names.”

Asked if she thought the smoke shop belonged in its current location, Johnson said, “Of course not! I’ve been fighting to get them moved forever.” She added that she had been opposed to the shop since it first opened a year and a half ago.

When contacted, Taylor Randi, press coordinator at OCM, confirmed cannabis shops are not allowed within 500 feet of a school. Randi also confirmed that New Stand Candy was not licensed, adding, “We inspected this location twice in 2023 with the New York City sheriffs and issued cease and desists.”

According to OCM, the shop was shut on Nov. 15, 2022, when it was called “Luis & Christian Candy Store Corp.” and once again on Nov. 28, 2022, when it was called “Mazai Smoke Place Corp.”

Meanwhile, the Magic 7 Smoke Shop, located at 174 West Fordham Road in University Heights, was the site of a brutal homicide and has closed for good. Police were called to the location on Saturday, July 30, 2022, after a man was stabbed inside the store.

As previously reported, police identified the victim as Kenneth Fair, 59, who was allegedly stabbed in the neck by store employee, Vernon Gowdy, 54. Gowdy has been charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminal possession of a weapon. *Norwood News* reached out to the Bronx District Attorney’s Office for a status update on

his case. He is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

According to City Council records, bill 1001-2023, prohibiting owners of commercial premises from knowingly leasing a commercial premises to, or otherwise allowing the use of such premises by, unlicensed smoke shops was enacted into law in the summer of 2023.

Meanwhile, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul was joined by several legal cannabis shop owners when she delivered remarks to lawmakers in Albany during a press conference on Wednesday, Feb. 28. Hochul appealed to lawmakers to strengthen the laws around smoke shops and allow law enforcement to padlock illegal stores, pending the conclusion of often lengthy legal disputes preceding closures.

“These illicit vendors flagrantly violate our laws by selling to kids, evading our taxes, and engaging in fraudulent advertising about their products,” the governor said. “We learned over the last year we had to take it a step further - \$10,000, \$20,000 fines are just too small, and they take too long to collect. They have drawn out investigations, months of hearings and appeals before these shops are told to pony up.”

She added, “In the meantime, guess what happens? The doors are still open. The money keeps rolling in. More and more cash keeps going in *their* doors, and *not* the doors of our legitimate operators, and that’s what needs to change.”

Anyone with any information on any of these incidents is asked to call the NYPD’s Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1 (800) 577-TIPS. All calls remain confidential.



# Legendery Yankees Radio Voice John Sterling to Retire

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The New York Yankees announced on Monday, April 15, that legendary Yankees play-by-play radio voice John Sterling, who has called 5,420 regular season Yankees games and 211 postseason Yankees games, is retiring effective immediately. The team said Sterling will be recognized in a pregame ceremony on Saturday, April 20, and will visit the WFAN booth during the game.

“I am a very blessed human being,” Sterling said in the context of the announcement. “I have been able to do what I wanted, broadcasting for 64 years. As a little boy growing up in New York, as a Yankees fan, I was able to broadcast the Yankees for 36 years. It’s all to my benefit, and I leave very, very happy. I look forward to seeing everyone again on Saturday.”

The Yankees said Sterling’s voice has been synonymous with the team for multiple generations of fans since joining the club during the 1989 season. Known for his resonant tone, signature home run calls, and Yankees victory call, “Ballgame over! The Yankees win ... Theeeeeeee Yankees win!”, they said he called 5,060 consecutive games from September 1989 to July 2019. His final game this season was the Yankees’ 8-3 win over Toronto on Sunday, April 7.

In a statement released Monday, the Yankees said, “Fans find a certain comfort in the daily rhythms of baseball. Day in and day out, season after season, and city after city, John Sterling used his seat in the broadcast booth to bring Yankees fans the heartbeat of the game, employing an orotund voice and colorful personality that were distinctly, unmistakably his own. John informed and entertained, and he exemplified what it means to be a New Yorker with an unapologetic and boisterous style that exuded his passion for baseball, broadcasting and the New York Yankees.”

The statement continued, “There is no shortage of adjectives to describe John and what he means to this organization and our millions of fans around the world. But what makes John a goliath of the sports broadcasting world was how sacred he held his role as voice of the Yankees. Showing up to perform virtually every single day since 1989, he was a pillar for Yankees fans who relied on the comfort and familiarity of his voice to be the soundtrack of their spring, summer and fall. Given the tremendous care he had for the team and his performance on the air, it’s not a stretch to believe that our fans live and die with every pitch because John Sterling did the same.”

The team concluded, “We congratulate John on a remarkable and illustrious career. His contributions to this great game and to the Yankees franchise will echo long into the future.”

A native New Yorker who grew up on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, according to Yankees officials, Sterling joined the Bombers’ broadcast team in 1989 from Atlanta’s TBS and WSB Ra-



Photo courtesy of New York Yankees Partnership ©

**JOHN STERLING, RADIO** commentator extraordinaire, at Yankee Stadium in 2015

dio, where he called Hawks basketball (1981-89) and Braves games (1982-87). They said it marked a return to the town where he first achieved success, hosting a talk show on WMCA from 1971-78, and calling the Nets (1975-80) and Islanders (1975-78) for WMCA, WVNJ, WWOR-TV and SportsChannel.

They said Sterling also previously called Morgan State Football (eight years) and Washington Bullets basketball in 1981. In addition to his seven years at WMCA and a year at WSB in Atlanta, they said Sterling also hosted talk shows on WFAN and WABC in New York. Prior to missing the Yankees four-game series in Tampa Bay from 7/4-7/19 due to illness, they said he had not missed a broadcast of any kind since the fall of 1981.

They went on to say that as the host of the YES Network’s acclaimed Yankeeography series, Sterling has won 12 Emmy Awards since 2003. They said he has also been honored by the N.J. Sportswriters Association with its Radio-TV Excellence Award (1999) and was the winner of the 2001 Whitney Radio Jimmy Can-

non Award.

Yankees officials added that in addition, his call of a Jason Giambi home run on WCBS radio in 2002 was voted the “Best Baseball Call of the Year” in a poll conducted by MLB.com. In 2002, Sterling was also honored by the NY Air Awards for being a part of the best play-by-play team on radio, and in 2020, Sterling was presented with the Governor’s Award by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

They said Sterling often served as a master of on-field ceremonies for major Yankees events and is well known for his emcee work at City Hall, with his former radio partner, Michael Kay, at “Key to the City” ceremonies following Yankees World Series victories.

According to Yankees officials, Sterling enjoys attending Broadway shows and boasts an extensive knowledge of the lyrics to many American pop standards. They said in 2007, he embarked on his own Broadway venture in a cabaret show entitled, “Baseball and Broadway,” in which he both served as emcee and sang alongside Broadway talent.

In 2016, Sterling was inducted, along with Suzyn Waldman, to the New York State Broadcasters Hall of Fame. At the annual BBWAA Awards dinner in January 2020, he received the Casey Stengel “You Could Look It Up” Award.

Yankees officials added that for the past 29 years, Sterling has been a spokesman for the Leukemia Society of America. They said he enjoys reading, movies and swimming, and is the proud father of four children: his daughter, Abigail, and triplets, Veronica, Bradford, and Derek.

In a statement, WFAN officials said, “Yankees radio will never quite sound the same without the signature voice, wit and humor of John Sterling. To generations of Bronx Bombers fans, he was a beloved companion that when you heard John, you knew it was time for baseball. Though he never wore the pinstripes, except of course for his fine tailored suits, he was one of the most colorful personalities in Yankees history and in all of New York City radio. All of us at WFAN tip our cap and salute our colleague and friend on a truly iconic career.”



# NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

## Bronx CB12 & Bissel Gardens Mourns Former Member

Bronx Community Board 12 and the Bissel Gardens Friends group, the latter located in Wakefield, are mourning the death of a former member and garden group co-founder respectively. Bronx CB12 board members said, "It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of former board member, Mr. Russell LeCount. Mr. LeCount was a long-time resident of Community Board 12 and co-founder of Bissel Gardens. There will be no services for Mr. LeCount."

In August 2017, Le Count had shared a flier for a planned Celebration of Life and Block Party in honor of his colleague, "Teresa," also a co-founder of Bissel Gardens. In July 2023, *Norwood News* had reported on the discovery of the semi-decomposed body of a woman on an overgrown track that runs from Barnes Avenue to Baychester Avenue through Bissel Gardens. Two people were later arrested on murder charges in connection with the discovery.

Referring to the gardens, one resident told us at the time, "It's too overgrown. It's unkept now. Bissel Gardens was a nonprofit organization that used to keep it for years, but the guy who ran Bissel Gardens, he died. So, it hasn't been upkept for four or five years now, so ever since that, now anybody could go up there and do whatever they want, and nobody sees anything because MTA has nothing to do with it anymore. They rented out or leased out that to Bissel Gardens."

However, it seems the group is still active. State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36) posted on social media on March 26 that his office, in partnership with Bissel Gardens, had planned to give away free native species trees on Sunday, April 14, at the Gardens, located at 4525 Barnes Avenue.



Photo via social media

**FORMER BRONX CB12** member, Russell LeCount, seen here with Phyllis Donaldson, has died.

## Traffic Changes on Bronx River Parkway Through March 2025

NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is advising motorists that there will be changes in traffic patterns along the Bronx River Parkway between Gun Hill Road and Wakefield Avenue in the Bronx, on or about April 16, and continuing roughly through March 31, 2025. The new construction work zone will be set up along the existing southbound bridge structure over Metro North, and two lanes will continue to remain open to traffic in both directions of the Bronx River Parkway. Two travel lanes in each direction (northbound and southbound) of the Bronx River Parkway will be reconfigured to be together. Inclement weather could cause these changes to be rescheduled. The traffic pattern changes are needed to facilitate work on NYSDOT's \$65 million project replacing the bridge carrying the Bronx River Parkway over the Metro North railroad tracks in The Bronx.

## Gas Station Manager Warns Public of Safety Hazard

A gas station sign at Bedford Park's Gastor Gas Station on Jerome Avenue,

damaged during recent storms, has left the towering heavy sign precariously tilting to one side and in danger of falling on top of passersby. The operator of the gas station, located at 2985 Jerome Avenue, by Bedford Park Boulevard West, near the elevated train tracks for the 4 train, recalled a heavy rain and wind-storm on Friday, April 12, that left the sign damaged, and at an acute angle.

Workers at the gas station have placed bright yellow caution tape and traffic cones around the sign to warn pedestrians and others of its possible collapse and said it will soon be fixed. However, they added that people continue to walk near it, oblivious to the potential danger. The gas station was robbed at gunpoint in August 2023.



## Program Launched to Connect Families Fleeing DV with Permanent Housing

City officials announced the launch on Monday, April 15, of "Project Home," a pilot program to provide "intensive, specialized housing search assistance" to domestic violence (DV) survivors and their children living in city shelters. Beginning with 100 randomly selected families and funded with a \$300,000 grant from the NYC Fund to End Youth & Family Homelessness, in partnership with nonprofit, New Destiny Housing, the program aims to reduce the time spent by affected families in shelters.

Eligibility for supportive and affordable housing units for DV survivors was also expanded. City officials said the expansions undo "unnecessary bureaucratic rules" that have historically made DV survivors ineligible for the City's supportive or affordable housing.

Photo by David Greene

**GASTOR GAS STATION** sign, left, seen on Sunday, April 14, 2023, on Jerome Avenue in Bedford Park is in danger of falling on top of passersby.

# Fordham Manor: Two Dead, Three Hospitalized, One Charged in Two-Car Collision

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Two men are dead, three women were hospitalized, and one was arrested and charged following an early morning horrific crash in Fordham Manor.

An NYPD spokesperson said the incident occurred at the intersection of East Fordham Road and Jerome Avenue at around 4.12 a.m. on Saturday morning, April 13, when cops responded to a 911 call regarding a reported car crash.

The spokesperson said that further investigation by the NYPD Highway District's Collision Investigation Squad determined a 23-year-old male driver was driving a 2022 Gray BMW X4 SUV northbound on Jerome Avenue, apparently at high speed, and drove through a steady red traffic signal, before striking a 2023 Black Nissan Rogue which was traveling eastbound on East Fordham Road.

"After the initial collision, the BMW SUV then struck the support pillar for the elevated train above Jerome Avenue," the spokesperson said. "EMS responded to the location and transported the 23-year-old male operator and his 21-year-old male passenger to St. Barnabas Hospital where they were later pronounced deceased."

The spokesperson said that the 36-year-old female driver of the Nissan Rogue and her two female passengers, a 26-year-old, and a 28-year-old, were also transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital where they were all listed in stable condition. Police said the de-



Photo courtesy of the Citizens' App

**EAST FORDHAM ROAD** and Jerome Avenue was the site of a fatal motor vehicle collision in the early hours of Saturday morning, April 13, 2024, police said.

ceased was identified as John Delorbe, 23, of Walton Avenue in Mt. Hope and Angel Tussan, 21, of Valentine Avenue in Fordham Heights.

Police said Jamie Winston, [the 36-year-old female driver of the Nissan Rogue] from East Harlem was arrested on Saturday, April 13, at 7.41 a.m. in the 46th Precinct. They said she was charged with two offenses, driving while intoxicated and driving while her ability was impaired by alcohol. She is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

*Norwood News* heard over the course of around a half an hour, and later witnessed, what looked like a black car seemingly speeding in loops in the vicinity of the Williamsbridge Oval park and East Gun Hill Road in Norwood at around 1.20 a.m. on Saturday morning but was unable to pho-

tograph the vehicle before it sped off again. We asked police if, based on any available surveillance video, that car was one of the vehicles that ended up in the collision. We did not receive an immediate response.

With CIS investigations, the NYPD handles all criminal aspects of the investigation, while NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) reviews the street design at the locations of such crashes.

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.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



# CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



## Fordham Manor: Man Arrested for 2021 Fatal Hit & Run

Police said a 50-year-old man from Kingsbridge Heights has been arrested following a hit and run vehicle accident in 2021 in which an 80-year-old, Fordham Manor resident was killed.

As reported at the time, on Tuesday, Nov. 16, at approximately 6.07 a.m. police responded to a 911 call regarding a pedestrian who had been struck by a vehicle at 2625 Jerome Avenue. Upon arrival, police observed an 80-year-old man lying on the roadway with trauma to his head and right leg. EMS also responded and transported the man to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased later that day.

A preliminary investigation determined that the man was struck by a blue Sport Utility Vehicle that had been traveling southbound on Jerome Avenue. The driver did not remain at the scene and fled southbound on Jerome Avenue. The NYPD's Highway Collision Investigation Squad was investigating.

The deceased was later identified as Tung Vo, 80, of Creston Avenue in Fordham Manor in the Bronx.

On April 12, pursuant to an ongoing investigation, police said that Pedro Guzman of Sedgwick Avenue was arrested on April 11 and charged the same day at 5.44 p.m. within the confines of the 50th Precinct, which covers some or all of the neighborhoods of Riverdale, Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, and Spuyten Duyvil. They said Guzman was charged with leaving the scene of an accident resulting in death. He is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

at around 6.54 p.m., a 54-year-old male employee was approached by two people inside a store in the vicinity of 8 East Fordham Road. They said both people displayed guns and demanded "property." Police said the two then made off with around \$100,000 worth of jewelry from the store, fleeing the location on foot, and added that the victim was not injured.

A woman behind the counter of the store later said she was aware police had caught two people for the robbery. She mentioned that on another night before it happened, when she left work, someone had stolen her handbag and the person had not yet been caught.

On Saturday, April 13, pursuant to an ongoing investigation, police said Angel Mendez, 25, of College Avenue in Claremont Village was arrested on April 2 at 7.15 p.m. in the confines of the 41st Precinct, which covers some or all of the neighborhoods of Hunts Point and Longwood. The precinct's main shopping area is located on Southern Boulevard from Westchester Avenue to East 163rd Street.

Mendez was charged with one count of robbery. Police also said that Victor Martinez, 24, of Valentine Avenue in Fordham Manor had been arrested on March 20 at 5.20 p.m. in the confines of the 52nd Precinct, which covers some or all of Bedford Park, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Norwood, Bronx Park, and University Heights. Martinez was charged with two counts of robbery.

Both men are deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law. *Norwood News* attempted to reach the suspects' families and neighbors for comment but were unsuccessful.

Anyone with information regarding



March 5, 2024.

Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**THE NYPD IS** asking for the public's help identifying the two people seen in this photo who they say are sought in connection to an armed robbery that occurred inside a store on Fordham Road in Fordham Manor on Tuesday,

## Fordham Manor: Cops Charge Two in Jewelry Store Heist

Police said they arrested two people for a commercial robbery last month in Fordham Manor. The NYPD had been asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the attached photo who they said were wanted in connection to the incident.

They said that on Tuesday, March 5,

Patrol Borough: Bronx		Precinct: 652		Week of 04/08/24 - 04/14/24			
CompStat Book	28 Day		Year to Date				
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	-100.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	1	1	0.0 %
Rape	-100.0 %	4	3	33.3 %	17	11	54.5 %
Robbery	-14.3 %	31	28	10.7 %	147	110	33.6 %
Felony Assault	-62.5 %	37	39	-5.1 %	176	170	3.5 %
Burglary	0.0 %	10	20	-50.0 %	53	68	-22.1 %
Grand Larceny	33.3 %	64	51	25.5 %	209	176	18.8 %
Grand Larceny Auto	0.0 %	24	19	26.3 %	101	90	12.2 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>-21.2 %</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>5.6 %</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>12.5 %</b>
Patrol	-22.0 %	163	159	2.5 %	686	611	12.3 %
Transit	-50.0 %	6	2	200.0 %	16	13	23.1 %
Housing	- %	1	0	- %	2	2	0.0 %
Shooting Victims	-100.0 %	1	1	0.0 %	11	6	83.3 %
Shooting Incidents	-100.0 %	1	1	0.0 %	7	6	16.7 %
UCR Rape*	-100.0 %	5	6	-16.7 %	24	16	50.0 %
Other Sex Crimes	150.0 %	11	6	83.3 %	33	25	32.0 %
Petit Larceny	23.1 %	154	241	-36.1 %	578	702	-17.7 %
Misd. Assault	-25.0 %	50	66	-24.2 %	235	208	13.0 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	1	2	-50.0 %

Source: NYPD

**MAJOR CRIMES IN** the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for the 28-day period ending April 14, 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, as well as year-to-date major crimes in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct as of April 14, 2024, compared to the same period in 2023.

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/>, or on Twitter @NYPD-Tips.

# Lawyer for "Fentanyl" Daycare Owner: "She's not a Monster"

(continued from page 3)

Asked more about Mendez's background, Solano described her as a worker all her life. We asked if she always worked in childcare. He said, "Not always childcare, but it was one of her dreams. She wanted to get into childcare, and it really was something that was amazing [eventually running the daycare center]. "Sometimes in life, we pick partners that we shouldn't necessarily pick," he said. "And there's always a lot of dynamic in that, and whether you stay in a relationship, you don't stay in a relationship. She has young kids herself."

Asked if her kids were with their grandmother, he said "Yes, but at some point, the Administration of Child Services is trying to take her kids from her because of this."

Solano then talked about the proportionality of the punishment. "What is enough?" he asked of the charges.

Acknowledging that even if Nicholas' death and the poisoning of the other children were not intentional, we asked about Mendez's negligence, and whether the charges were akin to other forms of child negligence, giving the example of a DUI or leaving a child in any dangerous situation.

He said for negligence, there has to be some level of knowledge, seemingly implying Mendez was unaware of the existence of the fentanyl at the daycare center. He compared that to a DUI scenario where the act of intoxication is **voluntary** (in the case where it is actually voluntary, and not referring to a case where someone has had their drink spiked, for example.)

He said it was a question of not only proving whether she knew or didn't know there was anything stored in the daycare, but also whether she knew or didn't know if **fentanyl**, itself, was stored in the daycare. Solano went on to

say, in part, "Yes, at some point, something can be so negligent that it could rise to the level of criminality, but you still have to be able to prove those first facts of negligence."

Summing up, he added, "They're going to have to prove that beyond a reasonable doubt, and I don't think they're going to be able to do so." Mendez and her co-defendants are deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

At a remembrance service for Nicholas held in October 2023, his father, Otoniel Feliz Samboy, said he felt the love and support of his family and each person and was grateful for it. Speaking in Spanish, he added, "I know my son's passing will not be in vain, not only because those who are guilty will pay, but also because due to his death, many things will change, not only in this City, but in this country and across the world."





## 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.



### OUR SERVICES

- Advocacy
- Safety planning
- Information & Referral
- Supportive Counseling
- Assistance with Order of Protection & Evictions
- Crisis Intervention
- Security Lock Installation
- Educational Workshops, and more



**FOR INFORMATION AND REFERRALS PLEASE CALL (718)542-0006 OR EMAIL US AT [INFO@NSHOPP.ORG](mailto:INFO@NSHOPP.ORG)**



## PROGRAMA DE INTERVENCIÓN Y PREVENCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA (VIP)

975 Kelly Street Suite 401 Bronx, NY 10459

### ¿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 promocionar la justicia para personas mayores, ayudándolos a navegar los sistemas y seguridad en su hogar y su comunidad



### NUESTROS SERVICIOS

- Apoyo y defensa
- Planificación de la seguridad
- Información y Referidos
- Consejería a corto plazo
- Asistencia con orden de protección y desalojos
- Intervención en Crisis
- Instalación de Cerraduras
- Presentaciones educativas, y mucho más...



**PARA MÁS INFORMACION O HACER UN REPORTE, LLÁMENOS AL (718) 542-0006 O ENVÍENOS UN CORREO ELECTRÓNICO A [INFO@NSHOPP.ORG](mailto:INFO@NSHOPP.ORG)**







**Letters To The Editor**

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

**Open Letter to NYC Councilman Eric Dinowitz**

As our elected representative, I was disappointed that you joined the other Bronx Democrats in the push to have our beloved Police Officers record every activity beginning this June with the public. Be that as it may, will you now tell us if ex-Bronx Councilman Andy King, who was expelled from the Council with a \$15,000 fine actually paid it? I would like to know who recorded that payment from the Council and on what date it was paid. Thank you in advance.

**Richard Marias  
Norwood**

*Editor's Note: Having been previously referred to the City's law department by the City Council in August 2023, Norwood News has requested confirmation at various intervals from the law department on the payment status of the fine. We have not received a response to date. We reached out to the councilman for comment.*

*Norwood News reached out to the councilman's office for comment, and were provided with the following statement: "Though certain elected officials and tabloids may lead you to believe one thing, the simple fact is that the bill requires the NYPD to share data they are mostly already collecting, which does not include*

*'every activity.' Anonymized data related to investigative encounters, much of which the NYPD already records, will be shared with the public. The manner in which that data is collected is completely under the discretion of the NYPD and the administration."*

**Access to Public Bathrooms**

Re: Larry Penner's letter to the editor on "Access to Public Bathrooms," [Norwood News, April 4-17, 2024], it utterly flabbergasts me how the author can simply ignore reality.

Reality #1: It is not the 1960s. The New York City subway is a homeless shelter and psychiatric hospital on wheels (minus needed medicine and care). A typical ride from Brooklyn to The Bronx, the second leg of my daily commute, will typically feature three homeless people begging in the car, at least three individuals sprawled out on three seats sleeping, and migrants hawking chocolate.

Reality #2: During the pandemic, the subway was closed from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. to sanitize it. The homeless were routed off the subway. The result: the subway was clean and free of homeless. Then a group of bleeding-heart liberals bellowed, deciding it was more compassionate to allow the homeless/mentally ill to wander the subway, making everyone's lives, including their own, miserable. Mr. Penner was one of those people advocating for the subway to be reopened. The result: the subway again became

a rolling homeless shelter.

Reality # 3: Unless and until a real solution is implemented to address the homeless cataclysm, reopening subway bathrooms will result in nothing but the bathrooms becoming a magnet for drug addicts, the mentally ill, and crime.

Larry Penner lives (barely) in Nassau County. He is retired. He does not ride the subway daily. I don't have an issue with either. My issue is that he speaks with authority, as an authority, on things he knows nothing about. He speaks off the top of his head about The Bronx and the subway without doing the slightest bit of research. If Mr. Penner were to ride the subway daily from Parkchester in The Bronx to Hoyt St. in Brooklyn, I guarantee you his perspective would change.

Also, Mr. Penner laments the bathrooms being closed for cleaning. How precisely does he think the bathrooms should be kept clean?

**Nat Weiner  
Parkchester**

**Earth Day**

Celebrate Earth Day, April 22, every day. Besides recycling newspapers, magazines, glass, plastics, old medicines, paints, and cleaning materials, consider other actions which will contribute to a cleaner environment. Leave your car at home. For local trips in the neigh-

borhood, walk or ride a bike. For longer travels, consider public transportation. MTA NYC Transit subway, bus, Metro North Railroad, Westchester Bee Line Bus offer various options funded with your tax dollars. They use less fuel and move more people than cars.

Many employers offer transit checks to help subsidize costs. Utilize your investments and reap the benefits. You'll be supporting a cleaner environment and be less stressed upon arrival at your destination. Many employers allow employees to telecommute. Others use alternative work schedules, avoiding rush hour gridlock. This saves travel time and can improve gas mileage. Join a car or van pool to share commuting costs.

Use a hand-powered lawn mower, instead of a gasoline or electric one. Rake your leaves instead of using gasoline-powered leaf blowers. A cleaner environment starts with everyone.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

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

**City Council Holds First Ever Arab American Heritage Month Student Roundtable**



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

(L-R): CITY COUNCIL MEMBER Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), Hostos Community College president, Cocco De Filippis, photographer, Zion Ozeri, and Rabbi Ron Fish pose for a photo at the reception for the "Jewish Identity/Jewish Diversity," photo exhibit at Hostos Community College in Mott Haven on March 4, 2024.

**By SÍLE MOLONEY**

The New York City Council made history on Tuesday, April 16, when it held its first ever Arab American Heritage Month Students Roundtable, organized in partnership with Speaker Adrienne Adams, who represents parts of Queens, and the Council's new Task Force to

Combat Hate, chaired by Council Members Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), who represents much of the northwest Bronx and is Jewish, and Shahana Hanif (C.D. 39), who represents parts of central Brooklyn and is Muslim.

"As a Council Member and forever  
*(continued on page 14)*

**STORMVILLE AIRPORT**



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# Out & About

Compiled by ARIEL PACHECO

## EVENTS

**The New York Botanical Garden**, located at 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, is hosting the first day (only) of a two-day symposium on the future of food, coinciding with Earth Day. The first day of the event takes place at NYBG's Rose Hall on Tuesday, April 23, and the second on April 24 at the Rockefeller Foundation Global Headquarters, 20 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. Tickets are free and include complimentary food and drinks. The event will also be livestreamed, is open to the public, and much of the programming is interactive, including plant walks, trivia, and more. For more information, visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com), and search for "Celebrating food diversity, scientific advances, and community innovation." Woodlawn Conservancy will hold a tree-planting ceremony, marking **Arbor Day** on Friday, April 26, at 10 a.m. at the grave of American Novelist, Herman Melville, best-known for his masterpiece "Moby Dick"

in Woodlawn Cemetery, 4199 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY 10470. The 400-acre urban oasis just received nearly \$200,000 in state funding to help maintain the grounds and will go towards identifying species of large canopy trees, planting new trees, and detecting and removing invasive species.

NYC Parks is hosting a **Cinco de Mayo** celebration on Sunday, May 5, at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, New York from noon to 2:30 p.m. For more information, email [ana.torres@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:ana.torres@parks.nyc.gov) or call (718) 543-8672.

The Bronx Museum, 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10456, will host a book club discussion on the book, "**Punch Me Up to the Gods: A Memoir**," by Brian Broome on Sunday, April 21, from noon to 1:30 p.m. as part of part of the "James Baldwin at 100 an initiative of One Book One Bronx & The Literary Freedom Project. Visit <https://bronxmuseum.org/events/> for details.

## ART

The Bronx Historical Society and The Allerton Coops in Living Color presents, "**Art as Therapy**," at the Museum of

Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx on Friday, April 19, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Joellen Eisenman, featured in The Allerton Coops in Living Color art exhibit shown at the museum, will lead a free, interactive workshop on art as therapy.

Bronx River Art Center, 1087 East Tremont Avenue, The Bronx, NY 10460, presents its new exhibition "**Never Wait! / ¡Nunca Esperes!**" which showcases the Bronx's visual arts community in a distinctive light that sets it apart from the rest of New York City. The exhibition is now showing until June 8. For tickets, visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com), and search for "Never Wait! / ¡Nunca Esperes!"

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Kingsbridge Historical Society (KHS), based at Edgehill, 2570 Independence Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463, presents a "**Photographic Panorama Exhibit of the Neighborhood**" on Thursday, April 25, at 7 p.m. For more information, email [info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org).

## MUSIC

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468, presents **Masters of**

**the '80s**, an elegant musical journey from the 1980s through the golden age of Salsa, with pioneering superstars of Latin music, Ray de la Paz, Rauin Rosendo, Ray Sepúlveda, and Robert Blades, on Saturday, April 27, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/80s-masters>.

The Five Boroughs Music Festival with Bronx River Art Center presents "**Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet: From Tradition to the Future**" on Saturday, April 27, at 4.30 p.m. at the Bronx River Art Center, 1087 East Tremont Avenue, The Bronx, NY 10460. Tickets: \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$5 for Students with ID. Enrolled BRAC students can what you can. SNAP discounts will be available. To book, visit [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com), and search under the event name.

## MOVEMENT

Friends of Mosholu Parkland hosts "**Beginning Birding with NYC Parks Urban Rangers**" at Mosholu Parkway North and Bainbridge Avenue on Saturday, May 4 at 11 a.m. Binoculars will be provided. For more information, email [mosholuparkland@gmail.com](mailto:mosholuparkland@gmail.com).

# Opinion

## Veterans Issues: Why They Are Important

By CHAD ROYER

Veterans make up one of our most vital demographics within our neighborhoods near and far. Some are open to sharing and disclosing their levels of service while others shy away from the subject. The people we interact with daily, like the police officer, the truck driver, the florist, the construction worker, or even the neighbors on our block may have served our country, and we may not even know it. Simply put, Veteran issues matter...or do they?

According to New York State's Office of the Aging, New York State has approximately 838,000 Veterans, and more than half of them are over 65 years of age. According to data from New York City Department of Veterans Services, there are 25,175 Bronx Veterans, 138,332 male Veterans citywide, and 12,592 female Veterans citywide. We may actually have more Veterans in our city, but do we know where all our Veterans are living?

Our Veterans continue to face challenges in The Bronx, such as food insecurity, problems with landlords, finding a place to live if unsheltered, getting discharge statuses upgraded, getting approval of disability statuses for the purpose of benefit entitlements, PTSD, mental health issues, substance abuse, and navigating portals designed for Veterans to enroll, renew, and receive services and resources.

There are additional issues other than those listed here, but the biggest areas of *opportunity* remain in Veteran engagement with residents who have not served, direct involvement with elected officials and their offices, and the process of getting Veterans enrolled with the VA to connect them to services.

There are public circles involving Veterans that help foster relationships with community partners, past and present, and some of the goals of such circles include identifying Veterans in our communities, connecting them to those who can provide them with help, information, and resources, and making recommendations that could positively impact Veterans to the City of New York, for consideration.

One small victory that was achieved last year was the passage of Bill 581-2023 in the city council, which now recognizes November as National Veterans Appreciation Month in New York City.

There are many people who play their part in this mission of helping our Veteran constituents. A few great people who have spent countless hours helping our Veterans include Army Veteran Pastor Crespo, Army Veteran Jeff Malone, Jr., Navy Veteran Joe Bello, Army Veteran Deahna Penn, and Navy Veteran Bernard Wright.

Our Veterans are people just like everyone else. They gave a lot for this country at the risk of their own lives. Our Veterans and their families should be helped, honored, and thanked. Some of the best ways that people can support our Veterans and their families include addressing their immediate needs, listening to them, understanding them both individually and collectively, and attending community meetings where Veterans affairs are openly discussed, such as at community board meetings,

and at the city council's public hearings.

*Chad Royer is a resident of Fordham Manor and chair of Bronx Community Board 7's Veterans Affairs Committee. Members of the City's various community boards are unpaid volunteers who serve on various committees with the aim of addressing local issues, and sometimes advising on recommended courses of action.*

*Editor's Note: A Memorial Day com-*

## Caban: "No Crime" by Cops Involved in Shooting of Kawaski Trawick

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Police Commissioner Edward A. Caban announced on April 12, that the two NYPD officers involved in the fatal shooting of Kawaski Trawick on April 14, 2019, inside his supportive housing apartment located at 1616 Grand Avenue in Morris Heights, acted within the law in relation to their actions leading up to what was described by police as "the 32-year-old man's tragic death."

On April 10, nearly five years after the death of Kawaski, a Black, gay man, his family, racial justice organizations, and elected officials rallied on the steps of City Hall to demand Mayor Eric Adams and the police commissioner "end" delays and "fire" NYPD Officers Brendan Thompson and Herbert Davis for his death.

According to the family and various justice advocates, Thompson and Davis "broke the chain on Trawick's door, gained illegal entry into his apartment, and tased and shot him within 112 seconds." They also allege "neither of the officers attempted to administer emergency medical aid and let

*memoration and flagging event to honor all U.S. veterans and active military is scheduled to take place at the Bronx Victory Memorial on Mosholu Parkway between Marion Avenue and Hull Avenue in Bedford Park on May 4 at 11 a.m. All are welcome. Email Steven Ochoa Camacho at [sochoacamacho@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:sochoacamacho@cb.nyc.gov) or call (929) 496 7687 for more information.*

Trawick bled out on the floor as Herbert Davis held the door shut."

On the night of the incident, Kawaski is seen in bodycam footage holding a bread knife and stick as police enter his apartment. He continues to ask them why they are there, and they repeatedly ask him to put the knife down while at least one officer has a taser gun raised and pointing at him. According to reporting by Propublica, Kawaski had earlier called the FDNY, falsely claiming there was a fire, in order to access his own apartment after getting locked out.

The outlet also reported that four 911 calls had come in about Kawaski in quick succession. A little after 10:40 p.m., a security guard said Kawaski had been "harassing" neighbors. Bodycam video of the incident was released on Dec. 8, 2020. Kawaski's parents had said in part, "There is no good excuse for why Thompson and Davis aren't already fired. Plain and simple, Thompson stole Kawaski's life and Davis helped him do it." We reached out to the NYPD for comment and did not receive a response as of press date.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY & ARIEL PACHECO



## Fordham Road BID Annual Meeting

The Fordham Road BID Annual Meeting takes place at Bronx Library Center, 310 East Kingsbridge Road, on Tuesday, April 23, from 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. All are welcome. RSVP at <https://forms.office.com/r/sEZ5RZZHqs>.

## Naloxone Training

Bronx Community Board 7 and partners host a Naloxone training course on Tuesday, April 30, from 6 to 7 p.m. Attend the training and learn how to respond to an overdose emergency, using Naloxone, life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of opioids, such as prescription painkillers, heroin and fentanyl. Contact Cristina Robles at [crobles@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:crobles@cb.nyc.gov) or call (718) 933 5650 for more information.

## 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:

- 1821 Prospect Avenue, with a deadline of May 20
- 714 East 217th Street Apartments, with a deadline of April 22
- 299 East 161st Street Apartments, with a deadline of May 28
- 1140 Grant Ave Apartments, with a deadline of April 24
- 1014 Ogden Avenue Apartments, with a deadline of April 22

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

## MTA Updates to Local Subway Services

Downtown 4 trains will skip 176th Street, Mt. Eden Avenue, and 170th Street from 4/16 - 4/19 and 4/30 - 5/3, between 9:45 a.m. and 3 p.m. For service to these stations, transfer at 167th Street to a Woodlawn-bound 4 train. For service from these stations, transfer at Burnside Avenue to a Manhattan-bound 4 train.

## Dance Research Fellowship: Mikhail Baryshnikov

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the arrival in the USA of Mikhail Baryshnikov, the most celebrated dancer of his generation. To mark this milestone, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division at the Library for the Performing Arts, part of New York Public Library (NYPL), which houses the Mikhail Baryshnikov archive, invites applications from dance scholars and practitioners interested in exploring the legacy of Baryshnikov.

The library welcomes both written and performative responses to research. Fellows receive a \$10,000 stipend, dedicated support to work with a dance librarian as they work in the archive, and an opportunity to present their projects at NYPL's annual Dance Symposium in January 2025. The research period is

July 1–December 31, 2024. The application deadline is May 15 and applications should be submitted through the NYPL's fellowship portal at <https://fellowships.nypl.org/home>.

## Citizens Information Session

A Citizens Information Session will be held at Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Library, 2147 Barnes Avenue, on Friday, April 19, at 3 p.m. Learn how to attain citizenship, join citizenship test study groups and more. Photo (718) 829-5864 for more information.

## Communicating with Toddlers

LINC Literacy in Community presents the last of four caregiver workshops caring for toddlers aged 2-3, "Stepping Stones: Why our Toddlers Talk and How to Respond," at Kingsbridge Library Center, 291 W 231st Street, Bronx, NY 10463, on Friday, April 19, at 11 a.m. Sign up at [bit.ly/kltalk24](http://bit.ly/kltalk24). Email Araceli Farciert at [afarciert@lincnyc.org](mailto:afarciert@lincnyc.org) for more information.

## Lotto Scam

The NYPD is advising residents to be aware of a common Lotto Scam whereby they're approached by a person or persons claiming to have a winning lottery ticket they cannot cash. They usually explain they'll share their winnings with the resident if they make a cash deposit. The NYPD are advising residents never to give money, jewelry, or other items of value to anyone unknown to them.

## 7th Annual Child Safety Fair

The Office of the Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, in partnership with the NYPD, The New York Yankees, Options and the Bronx Zoo, is hosting the 7th Annual Child Safety Fair on Saturday, April 27, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at P.S. 211 The Bilingual School, 1919 Prospect Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457. Learn about internet safety, body safety, bullying prevention, receive a free NYPD child identification card, and much more.

## Missing People

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the following people who were recently reported as missing:



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**DELFINO NAVARRO, 85**, IS reported missing.

Idelfonso Navarro, 85, of 2515 University Avenue in Fordham Manor, last seen on Saturday, April 13, at around 2 p.m. at the southeast corner of Creston Avenue and East Fordham Road, also in Fordham Manor.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**SATURNIA ROSARIO, 70**, IS reported missing.

Saturnia Rosario, 70, of 2691 Reservoir Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, last seen leaving her home, and reported missing on April 15, at around 8.16 a.m.

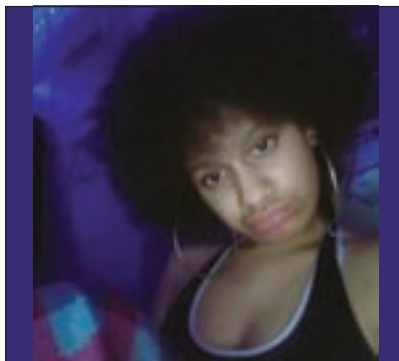


Photo courtesy of the NYPD

**ASHLEY DILONE GOMEZ, 13**, is reported missing.

Ashley Dilone Gomez, 13, of East 212th Street, between Bainbridge Avenue and Dekalb Avenue in Norwood, was last seen leaving her home at around 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 16.

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.nypdonline.org/>, or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.

## Painter, Decorator, and Paperhanger Apprentice Recruitment Drive

District Council 9 Finishing Trades Institute of New York, will be conducting a Painter, Decorator, and Paperhanger Apprentice Recruitment Drive to hire 750 apprentices at the union's training center at 45-15 36th Street in Long Island City, NY from May 3 to May 16, Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., with the exception of Wednesdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Successful apprentices will be given

on-the-job and in-classroom training to prepare them for the complex building market. Additional information is available at: <https://www.districtcouncil9.net/2024/03/25/upcoming-painter-decorator-and-paperhanger-recruitment/>.

## No Cost Site Safety Training for Construction Workers Impacted by Valor Consulting

NYC Department of Small Businesses Services (SBS) is urging more than 17,000 active, construction workers to apply to SBS's no-cost training program after their Site Safety Training (SST) cards issued by Valor Consulting were deactivated following the revocation of the company's status as a city-approved, safety training course provider. Those who apply will receive new replacement cards instead.

NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) has invalidated those cards issued by Valor following charges filed in Manhattan Criminal Court against the firm's senior executives and employees for allegedly selling the SST cards to workers without providing any of the required safety training.

As of April 2, around 17,000 such SST cards have been deactivated. Construction workers with these SST cards will no longer be allowed to work on the larger and more complex work sites in New York City until they are able to acquire a new SST card from a legitimate DOB-approved course provider.

City officials said construction workers who completed training courses procured by Valor should fill out the SBS Construction Site Safety Training Program interest form as soon as possible, found here: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/5958364/foodtraininginterest>. They said the SBS Workforce1 Training program is available now and prepares construction workers with the legally mandated 40 hours of safety training to work on any of the larger building construction projects that require a construction superintendent, a site safety coordinator, or a site safety manager to be on-site.

They said workers can meet the safety requirement by obtaining 30 hours of OSHA safety training, as well as 10 additional hours of more specialized SST training courses. They said New York City regulations allow construction workers to obtain a Temporary SST card from an approved provider after taking 10 hours of safety training, and these temporary cards allow individuals to work on SST work sites for six months, during which time workers must take the additional 30 hours of training courses to obtain a full SST card, which is then good for five years.

They said the Construction Site Safety Training Program is operated through SBS Workforce1 Career Centers in each of the five boroughs, and the program is offered in English, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. The Bronx Workforce1 Career Center is located at 400 E. Fordham Road, 8th Floor, Bronx, NY 10458.



# 2nd Member of B.R.A.G. Arrested on Drug Charges

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE**

Police said a second member of local cure violence group, Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence (B.R.A.G.), Jermaine Greene, has been charged with firearm and drug offenses, following his arrest at Fordham Road subway station last month.

The NYPD said that on Thursday, March 28, at around 5.42 p.m., inside Fordham Road and Jerome Avenue “4” subway station, officers observed a person illegally entering the emergency gate. “The individual was stopped on the southbound platform,” police said. “He provided [ID] upon request. Shortly thereafter, computer checks revealed that he had active warrants.”

Police said Greer was arrested without incident, and a search carried out on the basis of the arrest found he was in possession of a loaded 9mm ghost gun and a large quantity of narcotics. Ghost guns are firearms for which the parts are purchased online and later assembled at home.

Police said Greene, 42, of Sheridan Avenue in Claremont was charged with criminal possession of a weapon, criminal possession of a controlled substance, fare evasion, criminal use of drug paraphernalia, and trespassing.

Orange County DA officials said Michael Rodriguez, 49, of Yonkers, a former representative for B.R.A.G., was sentenced for drug-related charges in Or-

ange County on Thursday, Jan. 4. They said he agreed to forfeit a car and \$165,000 as ill-gotten proceeds of his crimes.

B.R.A.G. currently operates in three locations in The Bronx. B.R.A.G. North covers Wakefield, B.R.A.G. Northwest serves Fordham and Belmont, while B.R.A.G. West covers University Heights and Morris Heights.

B.R.A.G. works with teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25, mentoring and assisting in their development of conflict resolution skills. According to their website, between July 2017 and June 2021, B.R.A.G. responded to 1,035 disputes, organized 10,973 “interruption activities,” and worked through 2,353 “completed mediations.”

NYPD Chief of Transit Michael Kemper said, “When people question the value of fare evasion enforcement – look no further than THIS example. A convicted murderer (on parole) was packing heat when he beat the subway fare yesterday. He apparently didn’t get the memo that the NYPD is hyper focused on transit safety. He also didn’t get the memo that law-abiding New Yorkers are fed up with open lawlessness at the turnstiles.”

When contacted, the Bronx DA’s office said Greene was on [supervised] parole for a murder in Delaware and referred us to NYS Parole Division of NYS Department of Corrections (DOCCS). A DOCCS representative later said, in part, “Releasee, Jermaine Greene, is a COOP/

interstate case supervised under the Interstate Compact Agreement.”

He said Greene was being supervised by DOCCS for his convictions for a second-degree murder and second-degree assault that occurred in Kent County, Delaware, in 2004. He said Greene was incarcerated in the State of Delaware from April 19, 2004, to Feb. 5, 2022.

The representative said Greene’s supervised parole records indicate that he had “a projected maximum expiration date of April 17, 2026,” and added that his March 28, 2024, arrest in Bronx County represents his only known arrest during the term of supervision. He added that as a COOP/interstate case, his out-of-state criminal history is not reflected in New York State’s incarcerated look-up system, which only reflects a prior robbery offense.

The representative added that after determining Greene had violated the conditions of his parole in “an important respect,” and following an investigation, DOCCS issued a parole warrant. They added that the State of Delaware has been notified and DOCCS is awaiting a response.

Norwood News has also reached out to Delaware authorities for comment and for more information on Greene’s conviction. As of press date, we had not received an immediate response.

When contacted for comment, a spokesperson for B.R.A.G. said, “Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence is aware of the arrest of one of its staff. We take this matter seriously and are conducting a comprehensive internal inquiry to ensure the safety, welfare and trust of our program participants and the communi-

ties we support.”

The spokesperson said B.R.A.G. remains committed to identifying areas in The Bronx with high incidences of gun violence and connecting with young people in the community. “Our aim is to provide alternative ways to resolve conflict and help develop a positive mindset, demonstrating our unwavering dedication to the Bronx community,” the spokesperson said.

In a study analyzing the efficacy of its cure violence method, B.R.A.G. said a significant 63% reduction in the number of shooting victims in the targeted Bronx neighborhoods has been recorded. “This showcases the effectiveness of our interrupters’ efforts compared to pre-program rates, reinforcing our belief in the positive impact of our work,” they said.

B.R.A.G. is one of several community partners involved in New York City Mayor Eric Adams’ strategy to end gun violence. Greene is deemed innocent of the latest charges, unless and until convicted in a court of law.



Photo via social media

**JERMAINE GREENE**, A member of Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence, was arrested on March 28, 2024, on firearm and drug charges at Fordham Road subway station.

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**Invitation to Bid:**

## Security Equipment Contractors

Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC) is seeking open bids (April 19 - May) for the procurement of security equipment for our premises located at 934 Gun Hill Rd. Bronx NY 10469.

We invite interested and qualified contractors to submit their bid proposals for consideration.

Contact Information: For inquiries, and to obtain the complete bid package, please contact:

Ivan Diaz [IDiaz@mmcc.org](mailto:IDiaz@mmcc.org)

Ray Sanchez [RSanchez@mmcc.org](mailto:RSanchez@mmcc.org)





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### BEDFORD PARK DRAWING CLUB

Is anyone interested in a weekly figure-drawing meet-up in the Bedford Park, Bronx area? A room might be available for this sketch group to meet in if there is enough interest. Artists would be responsible for their own drawing materials and would sketch a clothed model in a variety of timed poses. All levels would be welcome! Contact [BedfordParkDrawingClub@gmail.com](mailto:BedfordParkDrawingClub@gmail.com) for details.

## Public and Community Meetings

The next **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting takes place on Thursday, April 25, at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Refuge Church, 290 E 196<sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx, NY 10458. 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, April 23, at 6.30 p.m. at Scott Towers, 3400 Paul Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

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

The **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (lobby floor). The next meeting will be in May. For more details, please contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## City Council Holds First Ever Arab American Heritage Month Student Roundtable

*(continued from page 10)*

educator, I believe that it is the Council's duty to take the initiative to foster a safe space for all of our students," said Dinowitz. "Every student should feel a sense of community, and no student should have to experience any type of hate for their racial and ethnic identities."

Council members described the event as noteworthy, saying it signifies the council's recognition of Arab American Heritage Month, as well as the upcoming Asian American and Pacific Islanders Month, Pride Month, and Jewish Heritage Month. They said it also shows its proactive collaboration with the aforementioned communities who have been directly and disproportionately affected by hate crimes in recent years.

The roundtable fosters a two-way dialogue between the council and students in the city whose voices, they said, needed to be uplifted as hatred is fought

across New York City. Each of the attending council members invited students from their respective districts to partake in discourse with the aim of ultimately drawing a comprehensive picture of the status quo for Arab American students. Council members said the conversations provided the attendees with a nuanced perspective of community and bias in the city's schools and broader neighborhoods, as well as a more tailored outlook on necessary recommendations and policies.

Dinowitz added, "The roundtable is a significant step in incorporating public experience in the Council's response to the uptick in hate crimes and ensuring that our students are protected in the ways that they need. I am thankful to our members and the Speaker for not only joining this endeavor, but doing so with a passionate and vigilant dedication that has spurred Council action."



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# Orchid Show Stuns at NYBG

(continued from page 1)

social issues and awareness, and her main concern is staying true to her craft, and staying on course to becoming a fully sustainable and radically transparent brand. When approached to display at the show, Taymour said, "I was really excited and I wanted to approach fashion in this way that was outer-worldly, so we created these beautiful mannequins, which are very much, 'Are they/aren't they aliens, frogs, horses, who knows?' But I love the way they turned out."

Taymour said she learned a lot about orchids during the process. "They're quite delicate; it was harder to work with than I thought they were going to be but ultimately, the beauty is incomparable, so I think we'll be using a lot of orchids in the future."

For her part, Cheng is founder of both the Dauphinette fashion label, and Meyfleur, the latter "a sartorial playground for extraordinary old things: upcycled and vintage pieces." Cheng said that when creating the collection for The Orchid Show, she thought a lot about the concept of orchid punks.

"There's this rebelliousness to the orchid and having the breathtaking, ethereal, "glowiness" and dewiness

of the orchid, sat next to spiky, dry, "powderiness" of a Tangelia [plant] is something that I really became fascinated with and really like the duality of them that's represented throughout my work.

She added, "I'm most excited to be working with the Botanical Garden because typically in my art practice as a fashion designer, I'm used to bringing unconventional materials onto a runway, but in this scenario, I was able to work with real living plants and watch those pieces not only come to life, but remain living and remain sustained and watch them even grow throughout the duration of the exhibition."

City Councilmember Amanda Farias (C.D. 18), who represents the neighborhoods of Soundview-Bruckner, Soundview-Clason Point, Castle Hill-Unionport, Harding Park, Parkchester, and Westchester Square, partnered with the New York Botanical Garden to host a Community Day for Bronxites, providing nearly 500 tickets to her constituents to enjoy the Orchid Show for free. Meanwhile, visitor Lucia Albero from New Jersey, said, in part, of the show, "Amazing Orchid Show, NYBG. Fun Fact: there are over 28,000 types of orchids, and they grow on every conti-



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**"THE ORCHID SHOW: Florals in Fashion,"** seen here on April 6, 2024, is on display at the New York Botanical Garden through April 21, 2024.

nent, except Antarctica."

Meanwhile, botanical artist and founder of Haus of Stems, Alpaugh, also known as FLWR PSTL, describes herself as, "if Edward Scissorhands and Willy Wonka had a flower baby...with a splash of Bob Ros." Of her exhibit, she said, "The natural world, being a botanical artist, is woven into everything that I do. For this particular exhibit, I really studied orchids and the way that their petals move, and the curves and the patterns."

Alpaugh went on to say that her vision for the exhibit was to capture the history of her time being born and raised on the East coast of New Jersey and to translate that into flowers. "I think in our lifetime we have so many different versions of ourselves, and so Regina, which is the center piece of the exhibit, is all of the mannequins and none of the mannequins all at the same time."

In other NYBG news, the organization recently received a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grant of \$500,000. Thanking

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and the New York congressional delegation for their efforts in securing the grant, NYBG officials said it will be used for critical climate research carried out by their scientists.

"This will help us better understand and employ nature-based solutions to our climate crisis here in New York City and beyond, and provide public education to help New Yorkers improve their neighborhoods at a time when many populations are increasingly vulnerable to climate change," they said.

There is still a chance to catch the Orchid Show through April 21. Indeed, the designers brought this year's show to life with such dramatic effect that it was a slow motion walk through the display on April 6, due to the sheer number of attendees, with many more waiting in line outside.

Of her exhibit, Alpaugh concluded, "What I'd like visitors to capture is we all have phases in our lives, and we change, and we morph, and it's all part of the journey."



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