



NORWOOD NEWS

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FORDHAM VILLAGE VETERANS FED UP WITH LIVING CONDITIONS



Photo by David Greene

FORDHAM VILLAGE, LOCATED at 355 E 194th Street in the Fordham Manor section of the Bronx, is a veterans' community residence which opened in 2011 and is managed by the Jericho Project.

By SARAH HUFFMAN

While many Bronxites took the usual time to honor local veterans at various events held across the borough on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, residents of the Fordham Village veterans' community, located in the Fordham Manor section of the Bronx, are fed-up complaining about reportedly substandard living conditions, and are demanding action.

Addressing the needs of the Fordham Village veterans was the primary focus of the Veterans Affairs committee of Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7), during its Nov. 17 committee meeting, a follow-up on various complaints raised during the October committee meeting.

A review of the Oct. 20 committee meeting minutes, approved during the Nov. 17 meeting, found residents had complained about an apparent lack of cleanliness, lack of heat and hot water on a consistent basis, an out-of-service elevator, high staff turnover and loss of veteran staff over time. Residents added that they were "sick and tired of feeling neglected."

Located at 355 East 194th

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Hate Crimes up 800% in 50 Pct.
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Volunteers Serve 600 Free Thanksgiving Meals



Photos by David Greene

(RIGHT) AFTER A two-year hiatus, Bronxites enjoy a free Thanksgiving meal at Our Lady of Refuge Church in Fordham Manor on Thursday, November 25, 2021.

(LEFT) A YOUNG volunteer delivers a turkey dinner to one of 600 residents of Fordham Manor who turned out for the annual Thanksgiving meal at Our Lady of Refuge Church on East 196th Street on Thursday, November 25, 2021.

by **DAVID GREENE & SÍLE MOLONEY**

For the 25th consecutive year, volunteers with Part of the Solution (POTS) soup kitchen and pantry, and the Church of the Resurrection in Rye, New York, joined forces to serve an estimated 350 turkey meals on site to community residents at Our Lady of Refuge Church, located at 290 East 196th Street in Fordham Manor on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25.

Another 300 or so residents who had concerns about sitting and eating in a public setting amid the ongoing pandemic, or who were unable to provide proof of vaccination to enter the venue's cafeteria, were provided with a complete turkey dinner, along with stuffing, potatoes, and vegetables to take with them and prepare at home.

Christina Hansen, the executive director of POTS, said of the annual partnership, "We have this meal every year and it's a great experience for everybody." Towards the end of the day, Hansen said she believed the 85 or so volunteers had fed about 350 people on site, about the same number as in 2019, before the pandemic.

An additional 250 to 300 "grab-and-go" meals were also distributed to residents and Hansen said that additional food not used at the Thanksgiving event would be served or handed out to POTS visitors on Saturday, Nov. 27.

"Mitchell," a retired Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) worker who is a former, 40-year resident of the Bronx but now resides in Harlem, said of the meal, "It was good. Yes, turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and corn."

Wistfully, he explained to *Norwood News* how the annual Thanksgiving dinner was a tradition over at least a decade for a trio of former transit workers. "We

come every year, but one of our partners passed away last year so it's just me and him left now," he said.

Mitchell said he believed the crowd was much bigger in 2019, before the pandemic. "Before COVID, this place was packed." Asked about the importance of the annual Thanksgiving meal at Our Lady of Refuge, Mitchell replied, "This is really important... the outreach, because people are starving." He added, "Some people don't have food, so to do this is really, really a good thing. It's a good Christian thing to do."

On Wednesday, Nov. 24, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed the Nourish NY program, launched in May 2020 amid the pandemic, permanently into State law. The legislation reaffirms the State's commitment to providing support to those facing food insecurity, a predicament which the COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus.

"The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented hardship to so many New Yorkers and made the situations for those already struggling even worse," Hochul said, in the context of the new law. "The implementation of the Nourish NY program was a huge success in helping those facing food insecurity, while also benefiting New York's farms. As we get ready to celebrate the holidays, I am proud to sign this legislation to ensure our state will continue to combat hunger and provide for those in need."

The Nourish NY initiative reroutes New York's surplus agricultural products to the populations who need them most through the State's food banks. The program also provides much-needed support for the food producers and farmers who lost markets during the pandemic. The State's food banks help fill the gap by buying agricultural products from New York

farmers and food processors. The State has committed \$85 million to the Nourish NY program since its launch.

Back in the Bronx, as guests enjoyed their hearty meal, four members of the "Flume Ensemble," a group of young musicians from the Riverdale Country School, performed soft melodies for the guests as they tucked into their Thanksgiving meals.

Meanwhile, Monsignor Donald Dwyer of the Church of The Resurrection said of the annual event, "We have 700 parishioners that, for the last 25 years, have been coming down here [from Rye] to support POTS, here in the Bronx, providing a spectacular lunch for hundreds of people so we were happy to do it."

He added, "It's a big event for us. My people in Rye are extremely generous and all these people come down here. College kids come back. I just met a kid from Ohio State. He came back from Ohio yesterday and he came down here today and spent four hours volunteering to serve his brothers and sisters who are sick and hurting and hungry."

Dwyer said last year, they just did grab-and-go (meals). "This year, we're doing half and half. So far, we've served about 600 meals and business is off a little bit, but the weather is nice," he said. "600 people is a lot of people. It's one of the biggest Thanksgiving meals in the city."

The volunteers from both the Church of the Resurrection and from POTS said they will be back in December to organize the annual Christmas dinner. "Yes, we'll be back for Christmas again, same place, same people," said Dwyer. Then, as members of the Flume Ensemble began to leave, Dwyer said to them, "Great job! I went over to say hello to you, but you were reading your music. Thank you! It made a big difference."

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, following the not-guilty verdict in the Kyle Rittenhouse trial, and the guilty verdicts in the Ahmaud Arbery murder trial, we asked readers if they have faith in the criminal justice system.



"The two very different decisions make me believe, more than ever, that when a case is properly prepared and adjudicated with care, the justice system works. The biggest problem with the system, as I see it, is in the people who are responsible for running the courts. Would Rittenhouse have been found guilty with a more thoughtful judge in the case? I don't know, but we heard as much about the angry behavior of the judge as anything, and that's a problem."

Stephanie Keegan,
Somers, NY



"I was angry but not surprised by the Rittenhouse verdict. This country has a history of finding ways to remind us it was built by an inherently violent, racist system that repeatedly excuses the shameful behavior of white men. I held my breath for days assuming the case of Ahmaud Arbery would produce the same enraging result, but it did not. I applaud that jury for doing the right thing but again, the reprehensible conduct of the defense attorney was allowed to permeate that case. I'm relieved but not satiated or convinced we've done enough to move forward toward equitable justice. I know this country can do better than this. We just need to find the same conscience and humanity that we use when we judge other countries [regarding racism and apartheid]."

Tish Greene
Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn



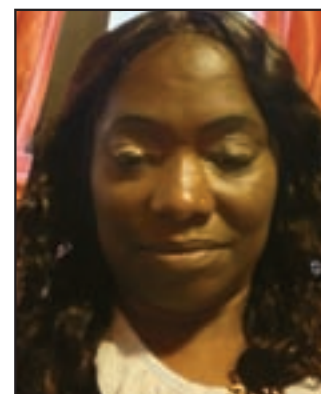
"The two verdicts last week represent a tale of two criminal justice systems. A system of justice that is often broken when it comes to minorities, and yet has potential, as we see in the verdict in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery. Self-defense cannot and should not be defined whereas one is the initiator or the aggressor, and this is what both cases had in common. The fact that Rittenhouse brought a gun to a protest, shot and killed two people and walked away a free man is a travesty of justice!"

Hiram Ratliff,
West Farms



"I feel very strongly that the verdict in the Rittenhouse case was horrific. It allows individuals to feel they can carry a gun, threaten lawful protesters, and claim self-defense as a reason for killing others. To allow anyone, especially a 17-year-old, to roam the streets with a gun is criminal in my mind. If Rittenhouse was a person of color, he would have been found guilty. In fact, I believe that the police who saw him [Rittenhouse] in Kenosha with a gun, would have shot him. There has to be legislation on the federal and state levels, setting boundaries for self-defense, this, in addition to strong gun-control laws. Our judicial system, as with our society, is innately racist."

Lewis Goldstein,
Pelham Bay



"We scream for justice, especially in murder cases. However, justice does not always prevail, as in the case with Kyle Rittenhouse, where justice was not served. Nonetheless, justice was served in the Ahmaud Arbery case. Rittenhouse got off too easy and should have been found guilty of one of the charges. He caused a lot of problems by bringing a rifle to a peaceful protest where he shot and killed two people. Therefore, he should have been held accountable for his actions. In this case, it seemed biased as well, and justice was not served."

Dr. Marylean Wroten,
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NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Infrastructure Bill's Impact on The Bronx

Following the signing of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by President Joe Biden on Nov. 15, Bronx Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) said it will mean millions of dollars of investment in the Bronx's infrastructure. Targeted projects include the daylighting of Tibbets Brook and covering the Cross Bronx Expressway with green parks and other community amenities. "The capping of the Cross Bronx Expressway in particular is a rare opportunity to correct a horrible design that I firmly believe has directly caused asthma and other respiratory ailments in tens of thousands of Bronxites who grew up nearby to this expressway," Dinowitz said.

Calls for Internet Access in All Homeless Shelters

On Tuesday, Nov. 30, State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi joined Shams DaBaron, aka Da Homeless Hero, community leaders, advocates, and elected officials on Fordham Plaza in Belmont to call for internet access in all homeless shelters across New York State. The event focused on the stories of those who have experienced living in shelters without internet access and stressed the need for funding to implement this change in the 2022 Enacted State Budget. Attendees advocated for the passage of Biaggi's proposed bill, S3593A, which covers this need.

Man Charged in 1999 Murder Case of Bronx Teen

District Attorney Darcel Clark announced on Nov. 30 that Joseph Martinez, AKA "Jupiter Joe," 49, of New Rochelle, has been charged in the 1999 killing of Bronx teen, Minerliz Soriano, in Co-op City after investigators used familial DNA, the first time the technology has been used in New York City to solve a case. According to the investigation, on Feb. 24, 1999, the victim walked home from school. Her body was found on Feb. 28, 1999, wrapped in a trash bag, in a dumpster behind a video store in Co-op City. She had been sexually abused, and her neck had been compressed, causing her death. A person accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

CB7 Talks Organ Donation & Crime Prevention over the Holidays

By JOSÉ A. GIRALT

In a rare, combined meeting of Bronx Community Board 7's (CB7) Health & Human Services and Public Safety & Quality of Life committees, attendees heard about the vital role organ donation can play in many Bronxites' lives, as well as tips to help mitigate against crime during the holiday shopping season.

The Health & Human Services committee meeting, held virtually on Nov. 16, invited Iliana Almanzar, the community and government affairs liaison for LiveOnNY, to speak on the importance of organ donation. Almanzar said the topic was a very important one which not a lot of people liked to talk about. "But it is something we must talk about, with a thumbs up," she said.

LiveOnNY is a nonprofit working with local hospitals and transplant centers to facilitate organ transplants for nearly 10,000 New Yorkers. Nationwide, more than 106,800 patients are waiting for an organ transplant, with 90,443 of those in need of a kidney, according to the latest available Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Almanzar broke down the data to local ZIP codes within Bronx CB7, which showed that 51 Hispanic patients in ZIP code 10453 are in need of a kidney. Within Bronx Community District 7 (CD7), she also shared data that showed that 392 individuals were currently on waiting lists for various organs.

Almanzar said one of the most important goals of LiveOnNY is to make sure donors have enough information on the topic before they decide to become an organ donor. "Someone dies each and every day waiting for a life-saving organ," she said.

"But then, there are families who don't have enough information on the subject, so they are unable to make a

decision... and they're overwhelmed with emotion," she said, adding that superstition can also come into play. "I hope you will all go home and express your wishes [regarding organ donation] to your loved ones, and if you haven't thought about it, to think about it," she added.

Meanwhile, the Public Safety & Quality of Life committee invited the supervisor for the 52nd precinct's neighborhood coordination officers (NCOs), Sgt. James O'Brien, to address some of the ongoing public safety concerns of the community. Several resident complaints revolved around vehicles, both parked and moving.

Chad Royer, chair of CB7's Veterans Affairs' committee, said he recently had a close call with a moving vehicle. "I almost got hit by a car that had a temporary plate because he ran the [red] light and wanted to speed just because he could," Royer said. He asked what police could do about the apparent prevalence of temporary license plates.

O'Brien acknowledged that there were some difficulties during the pandemic in tracking violations related to fake or expired license tags due to the temporary closure of the City's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). "If they're fake [the temporary license plate], we can make the arrest but last I heard, the Bronx district attorney is not prosecuting forged instruments, which means the fake plates," he said. *Norwood News* has reached out to the district attorney's office for comment.

"They might have printed them up themselves or made up the dates," O'Brien added. Even when plates are authentic, if they have expired, O'Brien said it results in a summons. "We have been enforcing it, traffic [cops have] been enforcing it, and it's a fine, obviously. The days of the DMV being closed are gone," he added.

Meanwhile, community activist, Sirio Guerino, of Guerinos Against Graffiti* expressed his concern about parked cars without license plates, and asked what the precinct was doing about enforcement. "We can summons them [the vehicle owner]" O'Brien said. "Eventually they can be towed," he added. However, the sergeant said, in his experience, tow companies have been very slow to respond. "We do have a list of cars ready to be towed," he said.

O'Brien also shared some tips on crime prevention during the holiday shopping season. For consumers who prefer shopping physically at stores and using their credit cards for purchases, he said keeping an eye on the person handling their cards can help mitigate against one method of potentially fraudulent charges.

"A lot of times, there's no reason for the person to take your credit card and leave [the register area], especially at a store," O'Brien said, explaining that one popular, in-store scam involves employees taking credit cards out of sight of the customer and charging gift cards to customers' credit cards.

In addition, the usual tips for safe shopping still hold true. The sergeant advised residents never to leave shopping bags, full of gifts inside their cars, and when possible, to make several trips to the stores to minimize walking around with multiple shopping bags, as this may attract the attention of thieves.

This previous tip is especially true when riding on public transportation, according to O'Brien. He also reiterated the one tip many New Yorkers know and abide by, "If you see something that doesn't feel right, or somebody next to you that doesn't feel right, maybe move somewhere else."

More information on organ donation can be found on the LiveOnNY website <https://www.liveonny.org/>.

Lottery Winning Ticket Sold in University Heights

It was an extra happy Thanksgiving for one lucky Bronxite. The New York Lottery announced on Thursday, Nov. 25, that one top-prize winning ticket was sold in the Bronx for the Nov. 24 TAKE 5 Evening drawing. The ticket, worth \$43,554.00, was purchased at Fordham Family Pharmacy, located at 202 W Fordham Road in the University Heights section

of The Bronx. TAKE 5 players with midday and evening draws on the same ticket should check their numbers at nylottery.ny.gov to determine if they have the winning numbers for the corresponding midday or evening drawing.

63-Year-Old Man Missing in Kingsbridge

The NYPD is seeking the public's assistance in locating a 63-year-old man re-

ported missing on Tuesday, Nov. 23, from the Kingsbridge neighborhood. Thomas Rosa, 63, of 3632 Tibbett Avenue in Kingsbridge was last seen at his home at 11.30 hours on Tuesday, Nov. 23. He is described as 5 feet, 10 inches tall, weighs 190 pounds, and was last seen wearing a green and black, flannel shirt over a gray, hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and blue sneakers. Anyone with information is asked to call

the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782).





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Hate Crimes Rise as Politicians Support Dinowitz following Swastika Incident

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Hate crimes across the City and Bronx are on the rise as elected officials continue to rally around Bronx Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), who is Jewish, in response to a recent protest held outside his office, organized by Republican gubernatorial candidate, Rob Astorino, on Sunday, Nov. 14. During the rally, which was held two weeks before the annual, Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, at least one female protestor displayed two signs containing swastikas and another protestor had a yellow star affixed to his clothing.

NYPD Sgt Edward Riley told *Norwood News*, "As of Nov. 21, 2021, there have been 497* reported hate crimes citywide." This represents a 95.5 percent increase compared to citywide hate crimes for the same period in 2020, according to police crime records. Riley continued, "Of those [497], 180* are anti-Semitic hate crimes."

In the Bronx, hate crimes are up 126.3 percent year-to-date from 2020, with 43 such crimes reported as of Nov. 21, 2021, according to NYPD data. Meanwhile, during the 28-day period ending on Nov. 21, hate crimes were up 300 percent in the borough compared to 2020.

In the 50th precinct, which covers Riverdale, Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, and Spuyten Duyvil, a broad area that is home to a substantial Jewish population, hate crimes were up 800 percent as of Nov. 21, compared to the same period in 2020. "A precinct level breakdown [of anti-Semitic hate crimes] is not readily available," Riley said.

When we asked the NYPD if the incident outside Dinowitz's home was being investigated as a hate crime, a spokesperson responded, saying no complaint report was on file in relation to the incident.

The agency makes clear on its website how hate crimes are defined. Under the law, a hate crime is a criminal act that is motivated in whole or substantial part by the perceived identity of the victim. For example, when a person calls another person an insulting name, agency officials write that it is just a name and not a hate crime, even if the name is hateful and offensive. This kind of namecalling is generally protected as free speech.

In contrast, the agency explains that if someone calls a person a hate-



Photo courtesy of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE, Rob Astorino, (at podium) addresses the crowd at a rally he organized outside Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz's Kingsbridge office on Sunday, Nov. 14, 2021, as a woman to his left displays one of a number of signs, two of which contained swastikas.

ful name because of their identity alone, and also assaults them, the assault is a crime, and the motivation [behind it] makes the act a hate crime as well. Police officials write that a hate crime designation can also apply to other crimes, such as criminal mischief and graffiti, like painting racial slurs or swastikas on public or private property, or the desecration of cemeteries associated with religious or racial groups.

NYPD officials write that free speech protections end with the committing of a criminal act, and that hateful speech or writing in conjunction with a crime, is a hate crime.

In response to the rally, held at 3107 Kingsbridge Avenue in the Kingsbridge section of the borough, which was billed as a protest against a child COVID-19 vaccine mandate, Dinowitz issued the following statement. "I am disgusted and offended by the anti-Semitic imagery that was brought to my office by apparent supporters of Rob Astorino's failing gubernatorial campaign," he said, adding that people were free to express their opinions on vaccine policy and on any issue, but that he drew the line at swastikas.

He continued, "I understand that Mr. Astorino is desperate for support for his struggling campaign for Governor, but to stand next to swastikas and yellow Stars of David outside of a Jewish legislator's office shows a lack of integrity at best and an embrace of right-wing extremism at worst."

The assemblyman went on to say that Astorino was not who New York

needed as governor. "I want to believe that this kind of unhinged embrace of Nazi symbols is why 95 percent of Republican leaders across the state chose to support somebody else for governor, but the jury remains out on how many Republican leaders will condemn Mr. Astorino's embrace of anti-Semitism."

Of his proposal to add the COVID-19 vaccine to the current list of required vaccines for New York school children, Dinowitz said, "I refuse to be cowed by anti-Semites or anti-science extremists. Vaccine requirements have a demonstrably positive impact on vaccination rates, and vaccination rates have a demonstrably positive impact on reducing fatalities and hospitalizations from preventable diseases."

To date, 46,443 people have died from the coronavirus in New York State, including 4,260 Bronxites. Many families live with the ongoing trauma and heartache of not having had the chance to be with their loved ones in their final hours, and not having been able to gather for a normal funeral service due to social distancing restrictions around such events. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a devastating impact on the economy. State Comptroller Thomas diNapoli confirmed in June 2021 that a report by his office found that out of all five boroughs, the Bronx was the worst affected, economically.

As reported by *Norwood News*, Dinowitz has been a driver of proposed legislation which aims to prosecute

those producing or carrying fake vaccination cards. He also held at least one virtual town hall combating COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on Sept. 23, 2021.

Still referencing the Nov. 14 rally, Dinowitz said, "Mr. Astorino wants you to ignore what you see with your own eyes and what you hear with your own ears by masquerading his anti-vax ideology as anti-mandate. It's bunk. His position is obviously anti-vaccine, as evidenced by the anti-vaccine signs and statements from the 40-50 people who attended his rally."

The assemblyman concluded, saying New Yorkers ought not to be fooled by what he called Astorino's double-speak. He called on the Republican candidate to condemn, in the strongest terms, the anti-Semitic symbolism displayed at the rally.

On the same day, Dinowitz shared photos of the event on Twitter, along with extracts from his statement. Many elected officials across the State immediately came to his support, adding their own words of disgust at the incident.

Bronx Assemblywoman Amanda Septimo (A.D. 84) wrote, "Disgusting & deeply unfair. This is what happens when we normalize vile speech in politics, and allow constant trivialization of the Holocaust. Anti-Semitic words & displays lead to anti-Semitic violence, and it is horrifying that @RobAstorino didn't shut this down on the spot."

Additional words of support came from, among others, Bronx Assemblywoman Karines Reyes (A.D. 87), Bronx Assemblywoman Yudelka Tapia (A.D. 86), Bronx Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie (A.D. 83), State Sen. Anna M. Kaplan, who represents parts of Nassau County, Manhattan Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell (A.D. 69), Queens Assemblywoman Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, (A.D. 34), Manhattan City Council Member Mark Levine, Buffalo Assemblyman Pat Burke (A.D. 142) and State Sen. Michelle Hinchey, who represents all of Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Ulster, Schenectady, and Albany Counties.

Dinowitz later wrote that it had been humbling and empowering to see so many kind, outraged and supportive words from his colleagues in response to the incident. "Thank you,

(continued on page 15)



Take Steps to Prevent or Control Diabetes

By CARLOS TEJEDA

While November marked National Diabetes Awareness Month, for many it also marked the beginning of the holiday season, a time when many of us tend to eat less healthily and do less exercise, two factors which can exacerbate diabetes. To counteract this, Montefiore continues to encourage people to learn ways to prevent, detect, and manage the condition.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that in 2018, 34.2 million people had diabetes. Of this number, 7.3 million didn't know they had the condition, or did not report having it. Over their lifetimes, U.S. adults have a 40 percent chance of developing diabetes. At Montefiore, we hear many questions and myths about diabetes in our community, such as:

- "The doctor said my blood sugar was high. What does that mean?"
- "Diabetes does not run in my family."
- "I have the remedy for that."
- "The doctor said I am prediabetic. What is that?"

Here are a few important steps you can take to prevent and manage diabetes.

Think About Your Risk

Many things can increase our risk for diabetes. For example, Type 2 diabetes, the most common form, is linked to family history, genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Genetics cannot be changed but knowing your family history and whether someone in your family has, or had, diabetes can help determine your risk. The good news is that other risk factors for diabetes can be changed, like the foods you eat and the amount of physical activity you get every day.

In addition to talking to your doctor or other health professional, you can find accurate information about diabetes on the American Diabetes Association's website (<https://diabetes.org>). The website includes a diabetes risk test, videos, and other materials to help you learn about diabetes.

Eat Healthy, Stay Active

Many ethnic groups rely on traditional ideas, foods, and cures as remedies for health conditions. It is important to talk with your doctor and health care team about your cultural traditions, practices, and foods so they can work with you to create a plan that incorporates those traditions. For example, plantains, rice, tortillas, yams, potatoes, and other tuber vegetables are traditional foods in many cultures, and they are high in carbohydrates.

Eating too many carbohydrates can contribute to weight gain, high blood sugar, and a higher risk of diabetes. If you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, talk to your doctor or a nutritionist to develop a

healthier diet that includes traditional recipes with a variety of vegetables and healthy proteins. Also, if you're overweight – a risk factor for developing diabetes – talk to your health care provider about simple ways to incorporate more activity into your day.

Work with a Health Professional

Many folks rely on friends and family for medical advice. While they can provide support and understanding, our friends may not have all the information about a specific medical condition or our individual situations. A health professional – doctor, nurse, nutritionist, or health educator – can properly diagnose and help you decide on a treatment plan. Listen to them, not friends or family, for medical advice.

A health professional can test your glucose (blood sugar) levels, which will determine your treatment. They will also discuss your ideal glucose levels and what you can expect if they increase, since high blood sugar can damage your body's tissues. With proper care, blood glucose can be managed and controlled. You can still use family and friends to support you with your treatment plan, but make sure you get your medical advice from your doctor.

If it is challenging to understand the information from your doctor or health care team, make sure you ask for help to clarify, translate, or access important information such as A1C levels, total blood glucose levels, diet, or physical activity. Request materials and information in your preferred language; bring a family member and a list of your questions to every appointment.

Identify and Track Symptoms of Diabetes

Often, the signs and symptoms of diabetes in its early stages can be easy to miss. They include getting up two or more times at night to urinate, having a dry mouth, or feeling very thirsty even after drinking lots of water or other drinks. You may also notice blurry vision, dry skin, or extreme tiredness. Let your doctor know the frequency of these or other unusual symptoms you feel.

Montefiore offers both free diabetes prevention and diabetes management education for patients, to help achieve a healthier lifestyle. Ask your Montefiore provider if you qualify, and you can still check out our dedicated Diabetes Awareness Month website, which includes additional helpful information: <https://www.montefiore.org/diabetes-month>. Lastly, enjoy this holiday season while taking charge of your health!

Carlos Tejeda is community health specialist at the Community and Population Health Department at Montefiore Health System.



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CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Student Stabbed at Walton High School

Police confirmed a 14-year-old student was brought to Jacobi Medical Center, following a stabbing inside Walton High School in Kingsbridge Heights. On Friday, Nov. 19, at 12.51 p.m., police responded to a call from the school. Upon arrival, officers were informed by school staff that two students had gotten into a physical altercation in a classroom. During the fight, a 15-year-old male student stabbed a 14-year-old male student in the chest with scissors. EMS transported the 14-year-old victim to Jacobi Hospital in stable condition, and the 15-year-old was taken into custody. No details of any charges have been released by the police.

Police said there may have been a dispute between the two earlier in the day. However, it was unclear what the motive was behind the incident. A New York City Department of Education spokesperson said, "Safety is our top priority, and NYPD and EMS immediately responded to an incident on the Walton campus today. The student is in stable condition, and we will provide the school with additional safety and counseling support, as well as work closely with NYPD on their investigation." DOE officials added that the rates of [violent] incidents in schools are down 16 percent this year.

Man Arrested for Fatal Hit & Run Incident

A 35-year-old man from North Riverdale was arrested on Nov. 27 for leaving the scene of a Fordham Manor accident in which a woman died. Demoy Adams of Spencer Avenue, a maintenance worker with the New York City Department of Education, was charged with "leaving scene of an accident without reporting – death" and "leaving scene of an accident with injury." On Aug. 28, at approximately 8.42 p.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding two pedestrians who had been struck by a vehicle at the intersection of East Fordham Road and Morris Avenue. Upon arrival, police observed a 44-year-old woman and a 53-year-old woman, unconscious and unresponsive with trauma throughout the body.

EMS also responded and transported both aided women to St. Barnabas Hospital, where the 44-year-old was pronounced deceased, and the 53-year-old was listed in stable condition. A preliminary investigation determined that an unknown vehicle had been traveling eastbound on East Fordham Road when the driver failed to properly navigate the road and struck the 44-year-old woman. The vehicle also collided with metal items that were on the sidewalk, causing them to strike the 53-year-old woman. The driver did not remain at the scene of the incident. The deceased was later identified as Murielle

Gousse, 44, of Prospect Avenue in Belmont. A person arrested and charged with a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Man, 80, Killed in Hit & Run Incident

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 in Fordham Manor. 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 Saint Barnabas Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased later that day. A preliminary investigation determined that the man had been 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 is investigating. The deceased has since been identified as Tung Vo, 80, of Creston Avenue of Fordham Manor.

School Safety Agent Arrested for Assault

Police confirm that an off-duty New York City employee was arrested and charged in the 45th precinct, which covers Co-op City and City Island. On Thursday, Nov. 18, at 10.17 p.m., Kayla Cox, 38, an NYPD school safety agent, was charged with assault. A

person arrested and charged with a crime is innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

Man Arrested following Shooting

A 25-year-old man was arrested following a shooting in Fordham Manor. On Tuesday, Nov. 2, at approximately 9.09 a.m., police responded to a 911 call regarding two men who had been shot in the vicinity of East 194th Street and Marion Avenue. Upon arrival, officers observed two men with sustained gunshot wounds: a 25-year-old, shot in the right leg; and a 28-year-old, shot in the right hand. The incident arose following a dispute at the location. A firearm was recovered at the scene, and the 25-year-old was arrested. He was named as Jeremy Maisonave, 25, of Marion Avenue in the Bronx, and was charged with attempted murder, assault, criminal possession of a weapon (a loaded firearm) and reckless endangerment. A person accused of a crime is innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call the NYPD's Crime Stoppers Hotline at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). The public can also submit their tips by logging onto the CrimeStoppers website at <https://crimestoppers.nypdonline.org/> or on Twitter @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Bronx CB7 Mourns Passing of Former Members

Bronx CB7 extends its most sincere condolences to the families of both Carmen Miranda, former CB7 Education Committee chair, and Jeffrey Hunter, former member of the Veterans Committee, on their recent passing. "We are heartbroken over the loss of two of our board members," the board said in a joint statement. "The community has lost dedicated advocates and true community leaders. Carmen Miranda was a mother and activist who was invested in making sure the youth in our community had a voice; and Jeffrey Hunter was not only a Veteran but someone who continuously gave back to our community, and [was] a staunch advocate for Veterans' rights."

COVID-19 Updates

As of Nov. 30, State & City officials said there were no confirmed cases of the recently identified [in South Africa] Omicron variant of COVID-19 in NYC. However, State and City officials warn we may start seeing such cases soon. There is no reliable evidence available yet about whether this variant is easier to spread, more likely to lead to severe illness, or if it's resistant to antibodies from vaccines or previous infections. However, officials said there are early signs it may spread rapidly.

Officials strongly recommend that everyone, including people who are vaccinated or who were previously infected, wear masks in all public, indoor settings. Vaccinations, masking, and testing remain the most important tools in fighting this new variant of concern. Vaccines are available for anyone aged 5 or older, and boosters are recommended for any adults who are fully vaccinated. Booster shots were already available to New Yorkers ages 18 and older. Learn more and find a COVID-19 vaccine near you here: nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

On November 26, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed an executive order allowing the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to limit non-essential, non-urgent procedures for in-hospitals or systems with limited capacity to protect access to critical health care services. CDC and DOH encourage all eligible New Yorkers to get a booster COVID-19 vaccine, especially those over the age of 50, and others with underlying conditions.

As of Aug. 17, people 12 and older are required to show proof they have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to obtain access to indoor dining, indoor fitness, and indoor entertainment. Learn more at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/>

[covid/covid-19-vaccines-keytonyc.page](https://nyc.gov/covid/covid-19-vaccines-keytonyc.page).

On Sept. 9, President Joe Biden mandated that all private employers with 100 or more workers require their workers to be vaccinated or tested weekly. He also mandated that all healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics and other facilities that accept Medicare and Medicaid payments, and all federal contractors must get vaccinated, with no opt out option.

Gov. Hochul signed into law a moratorium on COVID-19 related residential and commercial evictions, which is in effect until Jan. 15, 2022. To apply, go to: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/>.

The open enrollment period for uninsured New Yorkers has been extended through Dec. 31. New Yorkers can apply for coverage through NY State of Health, at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/> or directly through insurers.

Health care workers can text NYFRONTLINE to 741-741 to access 24/7 emotional support services. Any New Yorker can call the NY Project Hope COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline at 1-844-863-9314 for free, confidential emotional support and resource linkages.

NYC offers free, at-home PCR COVID-19 testing for all New Yorkers who are 65+ or immunocompromised. The service is available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and appointments can be scheduled by calling 929-298-9400.

The City has expanded its in-home vaccination program to all New Yorkers aged 12+. You can select which of the vaccines you prefer at no cost. To request your in-home vaccination visit <https://forms.cityofnewyork.us/f/home>.

NYC Mobile Vaccine Buses continue to provide J&J vaccines in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. The full schedule of mobile vaccine locations can be found here. Walk-ups are welcome and you can also book in advance through the Vax4NYC website.

The City of New York has launched a COVID-19 hotline. Through this hotline, you can call and get all your COVID-19 updates, including testing sites, advice from medical staff, quarantine information and mental health support. Call 212-COVID19 / (212) 268-4319.

The NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) requires COVID-19 vaccination for City employees and certain city contractors. Effective Nov. 1, City staff who are not in compliance with the mandate and have not applied for a reasonable accommodation were placed on Leave Without Pay (LWOP). More information is available here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dcas/>

[downloads/pdf/guidelines/faq-vaccine-mandate.pdf](https://nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/guidelines/faq-vaccine-mandate.pdf)

On Nov. 2, the CDC authorized COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 5 through 11 and vaccination has already begun in New York State. Vaccinations are available at City-run sites, schools and elsewhere. If you get your first vaccine dose at a New York City-run vaccine location or through the City's in-home vaccination program, you will be eligible to receive a \$100 pre-paid debit card or alternative. Find out more at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/vaccine-incentives-pickup.page>. Book an appointment at any eligible site with "\$100 incentive available" listed on the nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX4NYC (877-829-4692) to find a participating site.

Anyone who has received a COVID-19 vaccine at any time can enjoy giveaways from Krispy Kreme, Shake Shake, and Crunch Gym. You can also get 20% off at the CityStore to show your NYC spirit!

The NYC Vaccine Referral Bonus program incentivizes community and faith-based organizations to encourage members of their neighborhoods to get vaccinated by awarding \$100 for each person they refer who gets their first vaccine at a City-run site. When a person makes an appointment ahead of time or walks up, they can select the organization that referred them to get vaccinated. Once the person receives their first dose, the referral organization will be credited \$100, up to a total of \$20,000. Interested organizations can sign-up through nyc.gov/vaccine-referralbonus.

On Nov. 9, Gov. Kathy Hochul launched the 'Vaccinate, Educate, Graduate' vaccine incentive program for 5 through 11-year-olds for a chance to win a SUNY or CUNY full scholarship. More information is available here: <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/Vaccinate-Educate-Graduate-Vaccine-Incentive>. The deadline to sign up is Dec. 19.

U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy said that, to date, research has indicated that those who have acquired antibodies following an infection of COVID-19 may not have sufficient antibodies to fight a future infection, and that this is the reason why it is recommended to get vaccinated.

ABC News reports that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 vaccination providers cannot charge for the COVID-19 vaccine, cannot charge directly for any administration fees, copays or coinsurance and cannot charge an office visit

or some other fee to the recipient if the only service provided is a vaccination. The federal government has created a hotline urging people to report if and when they've received fees.

Get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines at these sites:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-facts.page>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19/caring-for-children/families.html>

COVID-19 Business Guidelines

COVID-19 restrictions in New York State have been lifted, subject to ongoing guidance (see above), since 70 percent of adults have received their first dose of the vaccine. For the latest industry guidance, go to: <https://forward.ny.gov/active-industry-guidance>.

NYC Utility Moratorium

New York's statewide, utility shut-off moratorium, which had expired on March 31, has been extended. The law extends the statewide moratorium on utility shut-offs, including water, heat, electric, telephone, cable, and broadband services until the conclusion of the COVID-19 state of emergency, or until December 31, 2021, whichever comes first. For New Yorkers suffering financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the law enshrines a further moratorium extension of 180 days.

Public Meeting on Racial Justice

A public meeting of the NYC Racial Justice Commission will be held on Friday, Dec. 3, at 4 p.m. EST. The agenda includes deliberation and discussion on ballot proposal topics. Additional commission meetings and past meetings are posted on the "Events" tab of the commission's website, <https://racial-justice.cityofnewyork.us/>. Updates, including instructions on how to join future sessions or meetings, will also be posted on the website.

NYC Parks After School Program

NYC Parks' After School program provides children with academic support and physical activity in a safe, structured environment. The program runs from Sept. 20, 2021, to June 10, 2022, from Monday to Friday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. For more information, go to nyc.gov/parks.



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“Community Not Cops” & “Public Land in Public Hands” Rally Held in Crotona

By DAVID GREENE

Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) and its youth arm, Sistas & Brothas United, recently held a joint rally billed “Community Not Cops” and “Public Land in Public Hands,” in the Crotona section of the Bronx. During the event, they called for community input into future development of City space, as well as an end to police officers patrolling the halls and stairways of New York City public schools.

The two dozen or so teens joined community land trust leaders outside a fenced-off vacant lot located across the street from Crotona Park, at 907 East 175th Street, near Southern Boulevard on Saturday, Oct. 16. Upon arrival, they got to work removing debris from the street and sidewalk, tied colorful ribbons to the fence, and left several drawings that showed their plans for the vacant lot.

Edward Garcia, director of community development at the NWBCCC, addressed the crowd, saying, “This is City-owned, right? So, the City has communicated to us that they have made a commitment to a developer for this property.” He added, “But we’re still claiming this property for community control.” Garcia continued, “The community knows what’s best for the community.”

The lot in question is surrounded by private homes and small buildings on both sides of the block. Garcia said, “Historically, the City has been doing business with public property, with developers that have no interest in actually meeting community needs or engaging [the] community in the development process.” He said NWBCCC wants to put residents at the center, and make sure it is they who decide what goes into the lot.

According to Garcia, NWBCCC has identified 27 such sites across the Bronx, many in the Northwest Bronx, for which they have detailed plans which are listed in a November 2020 report. Garcia said the report includes “some feasibility analysis” for the public land sites, which are sitting vacant and often neglected. He concluded, “The community has many desires, and they would like to see something that reflects the needs of the community here.”

Meanwhile, Crystal Reyes, program director for Sistas & Brothas United and NWBCCC, explained the group’s other motivation for the gathering, saying part of the Community Land Trust work is to talk

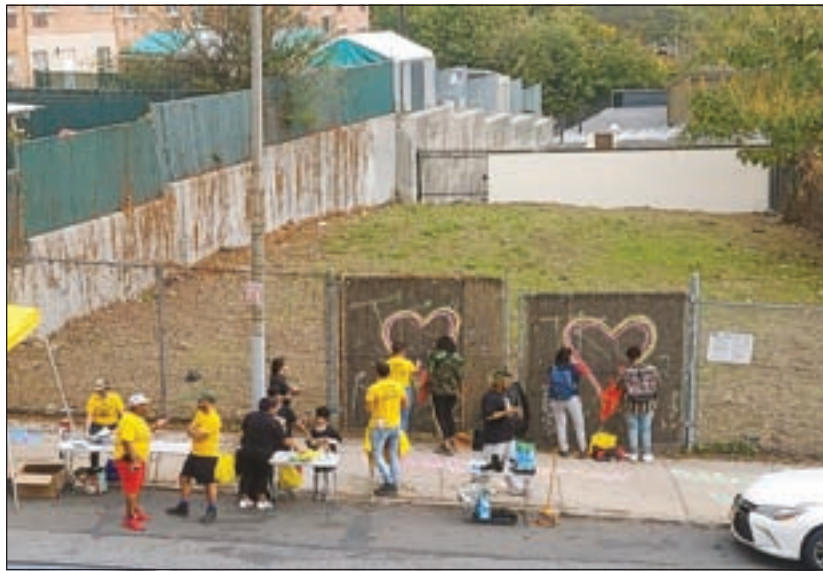


Photo by David Greene

NORTHWEST BRONX COMMUNITY & Clergy Coalition and Sistas & Brothas United decorate a fence surrounding a vacant, City owned lot on East 175th Street in the Tremont section of the Bronx on Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021.



Photo by David Greene

A DRAWING OF a park is left on the fence of a city-owned parcel of land at East 175th Street in the Tremont section of the Bronx as Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition and Sistas & Brothas offer their plans for the development of the site during a day of action on Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021. The group doesn’t want the land to be sold to commercial developers.

about community ownership, and part of Sistas & Brothas United’s work is to call for an investment in students, including resources young people need in their schools, like social workers and counselors. They said this is due to being heavily policed inside the schools.

Reyes said the group would like to see a divestment of some of the \$431 million, the Children’s Defense Fund, New York, says the NYPD spent patrolling City schools in 2019. Instead, she said the group wants to see these funds spent on housing, education, mental health, and jobs in

the community.

Asked about groups calling for more police in schools after a recent series of highly publicized incidents, in and around several Bronx schools, Reyes responded, “The reality is schools are not equipped to handle the kind of mental crisis that young people are going through.”

She added, “This is the first year they’re coming back into school after 18 months, and the schools did not invest enough in social workers and counselors. So, young people have a lot of trauma from the pandemic and everything going on.”

On the recent school incidents, specifically, Reyes said, “Most of the schools had police in their schools present. Yet, there were still incidents. A lot of that, that’s happening, trauma and violence like that is the result of [the] trauma they face in their communities.”

She then asked the fifty or so members attending the event to “share their visions for this space,” and to discuss safety issues for the area. Teens were encouraged to leave their ideas hanging on the chain-linked fence in the form of drawings and messages for the community. The group also planted seeds in several, plastic planters which they left outside the fence.

“Jay” from Harlem was strolling down Southern Boulevard when he noticed the large group. When told the group was against commercial development, he said, “I’d support a garden. Anytime you see people in matching t-shirts, you know they’re doing something good.”

Asked for his views on the policing of public schools, Jay said, “That is way above my pay-grade. I know that some people don’t know how to act with children and some children just don’t know how to act.”

One apparent resident of the area then blurted out, “I don’t care what they do with it; make it a park.”

A sign hanging from the site’s fence, posted by New York City Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD), listed Evelyn Cabrera as the director of HPD Property. *Norwood News* placed a call with Cabrera’s office on Tuesday, Nov. 2, seeking information on the proposed sale of the property, but the call went to voicemail. Cabrera had not responded as of Nov. 30.

City officials confirmed to *Norwood News* in recent weeks that it is on course for a June 2022 transition, whereby nearly 5,000 school safety agents will no longer fall under NYPD oversight but under the Department of Education’s oversight.

Hate Crimes Rise as Politicians Support Dinowitz

(continued from page 8)

I will not be cowed by anti-Semitic hatred. We can disagree on policy, but there must be a respect for our history," he wrote.

He also shared a voicemail he had apparently received from a female caller who voiced her opposition to the vaccination of children against COVID-19, while interspersing her views with a host of expletives, racist and hateful language, and adding that she did not care if the assemblyman knew her number.

Dinowitz accompanied the audio recording with the comment, "I'll share a glimpse of what I deal with on a daily basis from extremists. It's worse than many messages, but it's not uncommon. To whoever left this voicemail for me, it'll take a whole lot more than this to intimidate a lifelong Bronxite into backing down."

On Nov. 16, Gov. Kathy Hochul wrote on Twitter, "No elected official, no New Yorker, no human being should ever be subjected to hate, including antisemitism. I stand with @JeffreyDinowitz against these cowardly acts - we won't back down in our fight to protect our Jewish neighbors and condemn hate in all its forms."

On Nov. 17, State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi (S.D. 34), who has been known

to clash with Dinowitz on policy issues, issued a lengthy statement on the incident, saying in part, "I want to extend my deepest sympathies and acknowledge the pain and fear these acts of hate have caused Assemblymember Jeff Dinowitz, his staff, and the entire Jewish community in Riverdale. Such acts of hate and antisemitism are abhorrent, unacceptable, and have no place in our community."

Norwood News has reported at different times on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among Bronxites in general, hesitancy among those who especially oppose the COVID-19 vaccine for children, as well as COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among veterans.

In October, we also reported how a Spuyten Duyvil man was arrested and charged with hate crimes for vandalizing various synagogues in the Northwest Bronx in April of this year.

Following the incident at Dinowitz's office, Norwood News reached out to the Astorino campaign and asked if he equated a COVID-19 vaccine mandate to the murder of millions of Jewish people during the Holocaust. Phil Oliva, spokesperson for Astorino's campaign, replied, saying, "Rob never saw the sign, and would have

removed it had he spotted it. While he strongly opposes COVID vaccine mandates and passports, it doesn't compare to the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany. Rob believes we can disagree with people without calling them Nazis."

Sharing additional photos from the event, a campaign representative said the woman who held the signs containing the swastikas during Astorino's speech at the rally, had met the Republican candidate prior to the event and was holding a different sign at the time she shook hands with him.

Norwood News asked the Astorino campaign if it had a contact number for the woman in question and if they would be willing to share it with us in order to question her about her actions and views. Oliva replied, saying in part, "We have been unable to ascertain the identity of the woman."

On Friday, Nov. 26, multiple outlets reported that another new, highly transmissible variant of the COVID-19 virus called Omicron or variant B.1.1.529 had been detected in South Africa. In addition to South Africa, suspected cases of the variant have since been identified in Botswana, Hong Kong, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Den-

mark, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Israel, and the Czech Republic. U.S. President Joe Biden addressed the nation on the topic on Monday, Nov. 29.

Norwood News reached out to different Bronx-based Jewish centers for comment on the incident outside Dinowitz's office. We did not receive an immediate response. Riverdale resident, Michael Horowitz, who is Jewish, and who has previously written some opinion pieces for the Norwood News on Jewish-related matters, said of the incident, "The anti-vax people are imbeciles. To equate the mandates with the actions of Nazis is outrageous. Jeffrey Dinowitz and other politicians supporting the mandates should be praised for supporting vaccine mandates, rather than be condemned as Nazis."

Editor's Note: Get the facts regarding the COVID-19 vaccine at <https://covid19-vaccine.health.ny.gov/frequently-asked-questions-0>.

To report a hate crime in progress or any emergency, call 911. Non-emergencies should be reported to the local precinct.

**According to the NYPD, the hate crime task force statistics referenced above are subject to change as active possible bias cases can be reclassified to non-bias cases.*



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Out & About

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY

EVENTS

Van Cortlandt House Museum is hosting a **Cozy Community Campfire** on Sunday, Dec. 5, between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Gather together outdoors for a festive campfire, complete with free marshmallows and warm, mulled cider while supplies last. There will also be DIY s'mores kits available also for purchase (\$5 each or 3/\$12), a storyteller, an elf-house hunt, and other fun activities (depending on the weather).

There will be two campfire stations to help with social distancing. The event is best for children ages 5 and up and all children must be accompanied by an adult. Van Cortlandt House Museum and Gift Shop will be open. Entrance for both requires proof of vaccination and use of a mask. Last admission to the museum will be at 3 p.m.

Bronx Community Board 7's **Holiday Tree Lighting** event will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 7, at 6 p.m. at Mosholu Parkway Lawn at the intersection of Mosholu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue. Come and enjoy this year's Winter Wonderland where there will be apple cider, hot chocolate, holiday activities & entertainment and of course, the tree lighting.

Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition will be holding a **Holiday Gathering** on Thursday, Dec. 11, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Mary Mitchell Center, 2007 Mapes Avenue, Bronx NY 10460. Proof of vaccination or a negative test is required. For more information, email info@northwestbronx.org.

Northwest Bronx Indivisible is hosting a virtual event via ZOOM, entitled, "**What Can I Do About Climate Change?**" on Sunday, Dec. 5, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.,

with guest speakers, Victor Davila, Huntspoint activist and organizer, and Dr. Jack Gorman of the Climate Psychiatry Alliance. Contact Dan Guenzburger at dan3720@optonline.net or (718) 664-4222 for more information. Register for the event at <http://tiny.cc/nwbi-dec>.

ART & KIDS EVENTS

Residents have until Dec. 31 to sign up for free membership to the City's various recreation centers. **Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center**, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval E, Bronx, NY 10467, is holding a Night Art class of painting wine bottles on Friday, Dec. 17, from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and a Winter Wonderland event on Saturday, Dec. 18, from noon to 2 p.m., where there will be arts & crafts, as well as a visit by Santa! All programs require proof of vaccination for people aged 12 and over. Masks must be worn inside.

MUSIC

Lehman Center for the Performing Arts presents Victoria Sanabria with Puerto Rico's number one plena group, Plena Libre, on Saturday, Dec 4, at 8 p.m., with special guest, Prodigio Claudio. Altogether, the folkloric sounds of Puerto Rican music will be flowing through the halls of Lehman Center. Captivating and moving

audiences over the course of a 26-year, 15-album career, Lehman Center officials say this fine-tuned ensemble of virtuoso musicians has only gotten better with age, as evidenced by their four recent GRAMMY® nominations and world-wide touring schedule. Lehman Center for the Performing Arts is located on the campus of Lehman College/CUNY at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468. Tickets can be purchased at (718) 960-8833 or online at www.LehmanCenter.org.

MOVEMENT

Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval E, Bronx, NY 10467, is holding an open dance floor event on Friday, Dec. 17 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Residents have until Dec. 31 to sign up for free membership. All programs require proof of vaccination for people aged 12 and over. Masks must be worn inside.

The Bronx Democratic Party and the Police Athletic League is hosting a **Basketball Tournament** between the Young Dems & Elected Officials on Saturday, Dec. 4, at 991 Longwood Avenue in the South Bronx. Admission for spectators is \$10, the fee to play for Young Democrats is \$25 and for elected officials, \$50. Proceeds will go to a Bronx charity. RSVP online at Bronxdems.org/events.

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Public and Community Meetings

The **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., sometimes virtually and sometimes in person. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at 718-220-5824 to be added to the email list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The next full Board meeting will be held towards the end of December (date TBC). Contact ibravo@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meetings have been held via ZOOM. The meetings are usually held on the **first Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m.** The last meeting was held on Dec. 1. For further details, contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net

CORRECTION

Our front-page story about the new Fordham Landing project in the Nov. 18-Dec. 1 edition of *Norwood News*, referenced a 2020 YIMBY article about the project. Dynamic Star LLC told us there were two errors in the YIMBY story. The Alexander Hamilton Bridge, rather than the University Heights Bridge, was referenced in the context of the location of the planned, new building at 2475 Exterior Street. Meanwhile, Ronnie Levine was incorrectly referenced as senior managing director at Dynamic Star LLC, rather than at Meridian. We informed YIMBY accordingly and apologize for these errors.

In the Veterans' Day story on page 8 of the same edition, it was reported that Blandón Casenave, rather than John Ursini, was honored at the Fordham Hill event. In fact, it was Fordham Hill Owners Corporation board member, Blandón Casenave, who presented the honor to John Ursini, who served in the United States Navy between 1974 and 1978. We apologize for this error.



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Small Business Saturday

In these difficult economic times, because of COVID-19, it is especially important to patronize your neighborhood businesses. Do it not only on annual Small Business Saturday, Nov. 26, but every day of the year.

Small independent businesses are at the mercy of suppliers, especially third-party brokers who control the price businesses must pay for merchandise. There are additional costs of sanitizing the store and providing protection to employees who deal with the public during this ongoing health emergency.

I don't mind occasionally paying a little more to help our local stores survive. The employees go out of their way to help find what I need. Customer service is their motto. As an independent mom and pop store, they don't have the bulk-buying purchasing power that Amazon or large national chain stores have. The owners can't negotiate lower prices from suppliers. This is why they sometimes charge a little more. It is worth the price to avoid the crowds and long lines at larger stores in exchange for the convenience and friendly service your neighborhood community store offers.

Remember these people are our neighbors. Our local entrepreneurs have continued the good fight to keep their existing staff and suppliers employed without layoffs and canceling products or supply orders. They continue to work long hours, pay taxes, and keep as many employed as possible. Many maintain the tradition of offering job opportunities to students during the holidays and

**Letters To The Editor**

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

summer.

Customers also patronize other commercial establishments on the block. Foot traffic is essential for the survival of any neighborhood commercial district. If we don't patronize our local community stores and restaurants to shop and eat, they don't eat either. This helps keep our neighbors employed and the local economy growing.

The owners of independent mom and pop stores are the backbone of our neighborhood commercial districts. Thank the hard-working owners and employees who continue to work during these hard times. Show your support by making a purchase.

Stop by your favorite store and drop off a box of candy or cookies as a show of appreciation. Something sweet for the holidays helps take the edge off the stress we all face.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Response to Larry Penner's Letter on Express Bus vs. Commuter Rail,
[Norwood News, Nov. 18, 2021]

I often pass the line for the BxM-6 in

the morning, in Metropolitan Oval in Parkchester. The line is often ten, fifteen deep. Would the author like to imagine what the line would look like if the fare was reduced, per his proposal? The bus will be standing room only, not to mention the effect on traffic.

I have lived in the Bronx my whole life (60 years old in April). Before moving into Parkchester six years ago, I lived in Morris Heights for 17 years, before that in Williamsbridge, for 34 years. The nearest express bus stop in Morris Heights was a three-quarter mile walk, going uphill, and then downhill.

The nearest Metro North Station was less than a quarter mile away. I would estimate, based on the population density of my Morris Heights neighborhood, at least 2,000 people could walk to that station. University Heights, Woodlawn, Spuyten Duyvil, Fordham, and Yankee Stadium are other Metro North stations I can name that are very close to densely populated residential areas. Metro North trains can hold far more people than express buses and Metro North's carbon footprint is likely smaller.

In addition, while there is admittedly not a plethora of Metro North stations servicing the neighborhoods of Hunts Point, Mott Haven, Morris Heights,

Mount Hope, etc., no express bus I know of services those neighborhoods. They get on the Major Deegan Expressway at Fordham Road or the Bruckner Expressway via Sheridan Boulevard.

The author has an encyclopedic knowledge of Great Neck and the surrounding areas. Judging from his letter, he is not intimate with the Bronx. Why does he write about something he doesn't know nearly as much about as he thinks he does?

Nat Weiner
Parkchester

Food Drive Request for Norwood Residents

If you can, the St. Brendan's food bank, which gives out a bag of food to over 300 residents of Norwood, needs the following items:

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- Canned Fruit
- Instant Food

Thank you for anything you can give.

Richard Marias,
Norwood

Little Yemen: Search for 23-Year-old Missing Man

By SILE MOLONEY

This page has been edited to remove a previously published story of a 23-year-old man from the Little Yemen section of The Bronx, who was reported missing, after he was last seen leaving his home on the morning of Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. The young man was later located and his mother requested that his photo and personal information be removed from our website.

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Bronx DA's Office Hosts Reentry Resource Fair

By SARAH HUFFMAN

Bronx District Attorney (DA) Darcel D. Clark, together with officials from her office, hosted a fourth Bronx reentry, resource fair on Nov. 6, for individuals reentering the community after having served time in jail or prison. The event was held at Bronx Community Board 12's office in the Wakefield section of the borough.

During the fair, Clark spoke to the crowd, thanking her office staff and various partner organizations for putting the work in to help the community. "I could not get this work done without the community-based organizations that believe in this work as well," she said. "You are bridging the gap between leaving a penal institution, and returning back home in a safe way. So, I thank each and every one of you."

The DA spoke about the importance of both incarceration prevention and post incarceration reentry to the community, saying that if a person goes away and pays their dues, they should have the support of their community when they come back so they have a better chance at success, upon reentry.

"By having this resource fair today, the message that I want to send loud and clear to those citizens returning home is that you have a DA that cares about you," said Clark. "As much as I may have played a role in you leaving [home], I want to play a bigger role in you returning."

Clark had invited three speakers who had previously been incarcerated and had successfully reentered society to tell their stories, and provide some inspiration and advice to the attendees at the fair.

Felix Gonzalez spent 19 years in prison, but now works with the Fortune Society, an organization focused on successful reentry and alternatives to incarceration. "You all came out here today to find the services that you need. That tells me everything already about you. That already tells me that you're home. You're a returning citizen and you're interested in some type of change," Gonzalez told the crowd.

Meanwhile, Sharon Nunez was convicted of criminal possession of a controlled substance. She is currently an outreach and recruitment specialist for Exodus Transitional Community, an organization that provides programming to people of all ages affected by the justice system. Nunez told the crowd she took every program

she could, while incarcerated, to build up her skills, advising those present to accept help if they needed it.

"I took the help and the services of everyone when I tell you I have certificates from everyone. I have certificates from everyone because every little place that I've visited, and I have a certificate from, I gained a tool from, and I use that to my benefit," said Nunez.

Antonio Hendrickson was sentenced to 22 years in federal prison, but since his release seven years ago, has founded the organization, "Lead By Example, Reverse the Trend," which mentors at-risk youth and their families. He talked about his organization's work and how important it is to get in front of a problem before a young person ends up in a bad situation.

About 30 organizations attended the fair, offering information about the resources they provide to people reentering the community. This included information about further education, job searching, healthcare, financial assistance, support groups, etc.

Perdella Jean Baptiste, senior care specialist with the Nathaniel Clinic, a counseling and wellness center located in central Harlem, offered information about the services it offers. The clinic is part of the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES).

CASES provides bail and jail alternatives, mental health treatment, and education and employment programs for youth and adults who are involved in the justice system.

"I'm advocating on behalf of peers, and sharing with them different resources that's provided at CASES' Nathaniel Clinic and yeah, what's possible in terms of recovery," said Jean Baptiste.

Meanwhile, Madeleine George and James Kim from Bard College handed out information about their two tuition-free, Associate's degree programs in New York City, one in Harlem and one in Brooklyn. "We try to lower the barriers to education as much as possible," said Kim.

Kenny Inniss with the John Jay Institute for Justice and Opportunity was also at the fair, recruiting for college access programs. "So many people that are impacted think they can't do this, and they can't do that," said Inniss. "Well, you don't know until you've done some research... If education is on your agenda, let's work on that. Come up with a plan, start that process."



Photos by Sarah Huffman

(TOP) (L TO R) Antonio Hendricks, founder of "Lead By Example, Reverse the Trend," speaks about his organization's crime prevention work with local youth at the Bronx DA's Reentry Resource Fair held at Bronx Community Board 12's office in the Wakefield section of the Bronx on November 6, 2021 as Bronx DA Darcel D. Clark listens.

(ABOVE) KENNY INNIS with the John Jay Institute for Justice and Opportunity speaks with fair attendees about college access opportunities at the Bronx DA's Reentry Resource Fair held at Bronx Community Board 12's office in the Wakefield section of the Bronx on November 6, 2021.

Also present at the event was Terrence Bias, who handed out information about Strive, an organization that helps individuals overcome barriers to employment to develop work skills. It also connects them with partner companies and organizations. "It's great to see people coming out," said Bias. "It's great to see that we have the ability to talk to the community and help them to achieve their goals."

After her speech, Clark told *Norwood News* that she wanted Bronxites, espe-

cially previously incarcerated Bronxites, to know that they have a DA who is looking out for them. "People just need to know that they're not alone, and that they should accept help," she said.

"I think that message was loud and clear from the three speakers that we had who were formerly incarcerated or criminal justice involved, to hear from them, not from me, from them, but to know that they have a DA that thinks this is important," Clark added. "That's what this is all about."

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Mosholu Parkway Man Continues to Decline Help

By DAVID GREENE

An unidentified man who is currently homeless and had been living in a tent along the tree-lined center of Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park in October, seems determined to stay in the neighborhood though, to date, he has refused different offers of assistance.

As reported, the man suddenly appeared in mid-October, at one stage constructing a makeshift tent of plywood and yellow tarp at Mosholu Parkway and Bainbridge Avenue and was sometimes seen battling both wind and rain.

When residents contacted the City in October about the man's circumstances, officials from New York City Departments of Social Services, Homeless Services and Parks & Recreation sent teams to engage with him and offer him assistance. He was initially moved out of the Mosholu site but later returned.

As reported by *Norwood News*, on Oct. 19, Dan Kastanis, press officer with the Parks' department said, "We conducted two clean-ups at Mosholu Parkway today as part of the Mayor's Homeless Inter-agency Taskforce to address tents and refuse at the sites and we continue to coordinate with DHS on providing outreach to these [homeless] individuals."

Kastanis added, "Being homeless in and around a New York City park is not a crime. As part of the City's effort to provide shelter, support, and services to homeless individuals, if you see someone suffering from homelessness in a City park or setting up an encampment, please report it to 311."

Two members of two different, local community organizations, who preferred not to identify themselves or their respective organizations, told the *Norwood News*, individually, that they had also attempted to reach out directly to the man, asking if he needed assistance, but he had declined.

On Oct. 20, a spokesperson for NYC DSS-DHS said, "Helping our neighbors experiencing unsheltered homelessness get back on their feet is hard work in the best of times." The spokesperson added that throughout the pandemic, their outreach teams had gone above and beyond amid unprecedented circumstances to engage unsheltered New Yorkers, provide them with information on the range of resources available to them, and encourage them to accept those services.

DSS-DHS officials said they coordinate their outreach efforts in the Mosholu Parkway area via the nonprofit, Bronx-Works, whose representatives, they said, canvass the Mosholu location at least 28 times every week. They said Bronx-Works engages with six individuals who are known to their team, offers them services, and helps them come indoors.

In October, *Norwood News* also at-



Photos by David Greene

(TOP) A MAN who is currently homeless who had been living at various locations in and around Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park is seen living under the Mosholu Parkway overpass on Webster Avenue on Saturday, November 20, 2021.

A MAN WHO is currently homeless, is photographed on Saturday, October 30, 2021, lying on a traffic island surrounded by passing traffic at Mosholu Parkway and Decatur Avenue in Bedford Park, where he lived for nearly two weeks.

(BOTTOM) A MAN who is currently homeless and who had been living at various locations in and around Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park has declined assistance from various sources. He is seen pictured on Saturday, October 30, 2021 on Mosholu Parkway and Decatur Avenue.

tempted to speak with the man who at one point was located across the street from the veteran's monument on Mosholu Parkway. However, our attempts were met

initially with profanities. He later added, "I'm fine. I don't need no help."

The Mosholu Parkway area is marked by both heavy vehicle traffic and constant

foot traffic due to its proximity to nearby schools. At various intervals, the man was seen in a more secluded area behind the veteran's monument at Bainbridge Avenue, as well as on Hull Avenue.

From at least Oct. 30 through Nov. 13, he was seen by *Norwood News* lying on a traffic island on the parkway in the center of 6 lanes of traffic, including two turning lanes, miraculously escaping injury.

On Nov. 13, the man's belongings were seen strewn about after a heavy storm, and on Nov. 20, he was discovered living under the Mosholu Parkway overpass at Webster Avenue, across the street and just south of the 52nd precinct stationhouse.

He was wearing a hooded jacket and sleeping in a chair, with two supermarket shopping carts on either side of him which held two suitcases and other items.

Describing the situation regarding the man's circumstances when he had been living on the parkway, one of the local community organization members told the *Norwood News*, "There is a process which must be followed. The authorities have to wait a period of time before they can remove his belongings. DHS, police & PEP [Parks Enforcement Patrol] can then remove his belongings from the park. This was done at the monument, and again, the next day when he settled on the Parkway at Bainbridge Avenue."

The man has since moved to the area under the Mosholu Parkway overpass at Webster Avenue. The community member added, "I guess no one is complaining about his current location."

In fact, the overpass area *was* the focus of several complaints by residents earlier this year, but for a different reason. The site, just south of the 52nd precinct stationhouse, is where the NYPD stores vehicles that have been either confiscated or involved in a crime or accident.

Residents had been complaining that trash and bird droppings had been piling up around and on top of the vehicles, and that some vehicles had not been moved in months.

Norwood News has since followed up with DHS and Parks to provide City officials with the man's latest known location so that they can continue to engage with him and offer him assistance, especially now the weather has gotten colder.

When temperatures drop below freezing, it triggers a Code Blue warning across the City. People who may be at risk of hypothermia, especially those living on the street, can be helped. Residents can call 311 and provide the location of the affected person. Outreach teams will follow up and bring them to a shelter. Accommodations are also available for walk-ins.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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Bronx Thanksgiving Giveaways in Photos



Photo via Twitter
(LEFT) **DISTRICT 11** City Councilman Eric Dinowitz (third from the right) joined Worldwide Veterans and Family Services Inc to hand out turkeys at the Bronx VA Medical Center in Fordham Manor on Tuesday, November 23, 2021.

(BELOW) (L TO R) State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), District 16 City Councilwoman and Bronx Borough President-elect, Vanessa Gibson, Tracey Towers Residents Organization president, Jean Hill, and Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80) distribute turkeys to residents at Tracey Towers in the Jerome Park section of the Bronx on Monday, November 22, 2021.

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A host of Thanksgiving events and turkey giveaways were held across the Bronx in the lead up to, and on, Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25. On Monday, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), District 16 City Councilwoman and Bronx Borough President-elect, Vanessa Gibson, Assembly Member Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80), State Committeewoman (A.D. 80), Sandra Pabon, and others joined forces with Ridgewood Savings Bank at East 204th Street and Hull Avenue in Norwood to distribute turkeys to residents.

Adam Brill said on behalf of Ridgewood Savings Bank, “Ridgewood was happy to partner with our community leaders and elected officials to help those individuals who came out to pick up a turkey so that they and their family could better enjoy the traditional meal and all that the holiday offers.” Bailey wrote, “Grateful to partner with @Fernandez4NY, @Vanessalgibson & @EricDinowitzNYC to provide hundreds of turkeys for our Norwood families. Thank you @RidgewoodBank for hosting us today.” He added, “This work would not be possible without the commitment & dedication of so many incredible partners.”

Meanwhile, Fernández wrote, “I am so happy to have given out nearly 1000 turkeys to families throughout our district over the past few days, including [at] our office giveaway today with special guests, Attorney General @TishJames, and our incoming Bronx Borough President, @Vanessalgibson. #HappyThanksgiving”

Also on Monday, Bailey joined Bronx Borough President Ruben Díaz Jr., State Assembly Speaker Carl



STATE SEN. JAMAAL Bailey (S.D. 36), District 16 City Councilwoman and Bronx Borough President-elect, Vanessa Gibson, Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernández (A.D. 80) along with State Committeewoman for A.D. 80, Sandra Pabon and others hand out turkeys to Norwood residents outside Ridgewood Savings Bank at East 204th Street and Hull Avenue on Monday, November 22, 2021.

Heastie, District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley, former Assemblyman Michael Blake (A.D. 79) and sponsors and



(L TO R) Bronx Borough President Ruben Díaz Jr., State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, State Sen. Jamaal Bailey (S.D. 36), District 12 City Councilman Kevin Riley, a representative from Fresh Direct, former Assemblyman Michael Blake (A.D. 79), and other colleagues and sponsors distribute turkeys to residents in the Bronx on Monday, November 22, 2021. Photo via Twitter

colleagues to hand out more turkeys in the Bronx. “The Holiday Spirit is [in] the air,” said Heastie. “Today, we participated in a Turkey Giveaway prepping everyone for a happy and healthy Thanksgiving! It was great seeing fa-

miliar faces. Thank you to all partners @FreshDirect, @CityHarvest, @ymcanyc and @therulernyc for their efforts.”

Later, Bailey, Gibson and Fernández joined Tracey Towers Residents Organization president, Jean Hill, to hand out more turkeys at Tracey Towers in the Jerome Park section of the Bronx also on Monday, Nov. 22. Bailey wrote, “Last stop for the day! Grateful to collaborate with @RepEspaillat, @Fernandez4NY, @Vanessalgibson, and @EricDinowitzNYC to ensure our families at Tracey Towers have turkeys for the holidays.”

On Tuesday, Nov. 23, District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz joined Worldwide Veterans and Family Services Inc to hand out turkeys at the Bronx VA Medical Center in Fordham Manor. “Thankful for the opportunity to give back to our #veterans with @worldwidevets!” Dinowitz wrote.

Also on Tuesday, Bailey, Riley, Congressman Jamaal Bowman (NY-16), Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (A.D. 82), Gov. Kathy Hochul, members of the armed forces, and others handed out more turkeys to residents in Co-op City District 1. “Continuing in the spirit of giving, @jamaaltbailey, @RepBowman, @mikebenedetto82, and I were back in Co-op

City today for our Turkey Giveaway in Section 1,” wrote Riley. “Thank you @GovKathyHochul for joining us to give turkeys and goods to members of #The12th district. #Happy-Thanksgiving”

Fordham Village Veterans Fed Up with Living Conditions

(continued from page 1)

Street, News 12 The Bronx reported that Fordham Village was the first veterans' community residence of its kind in New York City when it opened in 2011, housing 55 homeless or at-risk veterans in individual studio apartments.

The project was co-funded by New York City Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD), federal and State aid and private donors. It is managed through Manhattan-based nonprofit, the Jericho Project, through the nonprofit's veterans' initiative.

Pix 11 reported at the time of its opening that Fordham Village provided subsidized rental accommodation, and that the residence includes a community room and computer lab. Meanwhile, the Jericho Project provides job assistance, substance-abuse services, counselling and more to the Fordham Village veteran community.

The November veterans committee meeting was held virtually, with all Fordham Village residents sharing the same device to join the meeting. It was, therefore, not always possible to identify who exactly was speaking but at one point, one unidentified resident gave an account of his living situation.

"My thing is, you know, with the refrigerators here, okay? The plastic around the doors [is] defective. I've gotten roaches inside my refrigerator." He continued, "I've been putting in paperwork, you know, for a long time. Nothing was done, I guess, because of the pandemic. I want something done."

The October minutes of the CB7 veterans committee meeting included additional complaints. Because of the broken elevator, Fordham Village veterans who are wheelchair users or who have a disability, could not, reportedly, run errands, attend necessary appointments, or travel on their own.

Chad Royer, Veterans Affairs committee chair, said during the November meeting that the committee had reached out to Jericho Project officials following the October

meeting for follow-up. Amjad Mujaahid, one of the Fordham Village residents who attended the November meeting, said Jericho Project officials did indeed send people out after that to start fixing some of the issues, including the elevator which he said had been broken for 35 days.

Mujaahid added that Tori Lyon, CEO of Jericho, organized a separate meeting with the veterans to allow them the opportunity to reiterate their grievances to her directly. He said Lyon told them she would check back in with them, two weeks after the meeting.

According to Mujaahid, veterans also wrote letters to Jericho and to elected officials about the problems they are experiencing at Fordham Village, as did veterans at other community residences.

"We want to keep this clean, not only for us, but for any veteran living in supportive housing or transitional housing," said Mujaahid. "Too many people are taking advantage of us, and that's got to stop."

Greg Faulkner is chief of staff for District 14 City Councilman Fernando Cabrera, and he also attended the meeting. District 14 covers Morris Heights, University Heights, Fordham and Kingsbridge. Faulkner said he had spoken to Lyon about having another meeting with the residents, adding that he had heard the elevator in another veterans' residence had also been fixed.

He said the momentum from that one meeting with Lyon, was, in his opinion, having a widespread effect. "I think you've definitely lit a fire," he said. "We got some action. I think we've got to keep the momentum going."

Meanwhile, Angel Leger, constituent advocate for District 11 City Councilman Eric Dinowitz, said he would bring the issues raised at the meeting to the councilman's attention. District 11 covers Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield, and Woodlawn.

Other topics were also discussed at the November meeting. Eva Hinds, CEO of Veter-

ans' Voices newsletter, joined the meeting alongside the Fordham Village residents, and said a veterans' get-together was being planned for a date after Dec. 4. She said anyone who was interested in finding out more about the Veterans Voices' newsletter could email her at vetvoneews@gmail.com.

Shawn Kingston from the Center for Development and Civic Engagement at the Bronx VA, later spoke to meeting attendees about volunteer opportunities, specifically at the Bronx VA hospital. He said anyone who was 16 or older could become a volunteer and that more volunteers in the customer service, clinical area were needed. He also said the VA accepts donations, both monetary and in kind.

"As I alluded to earlier, we suspended our program, but we're actually starting to bring our volunteers back in," Kingston said, adding that he's been in charge of the Bronx VA volunteer service for the past two years, having taken over at the height of the pandemic. "During the past two years [...] we've basically collected over \$400,000 in donations and donated items, and this fiscal year, we started Oct. 1, we're looking to basically have those numbers again," he said.

Tyrone Matthews, another resident of Fordham Village, who was also present at the meeting, asked if veterans who didn't qualify for federal VA benefits had other options of support available to them.

"They feel like they're just not included," he said. "We don't want them to feel like that, so what services can we have for the individuals who cannot attend the VA, to make them feel more welcomed?" he asked. *Norwood News* reported previously how some veterans who receive an other-than-honorable discharge, in some cases due to post-traumatic stress disorder, are not aware that there are alternative routes to obtaining health and other benefits.

Kingston recommended that impacted veterans file an appeal for federal benefits or look into State, City or local

benefits. He said they could also be set up with a support group or with someone to help them navigate available resources. He offered his contact information for people to reach out to him directly.

"We don't have the resources to knock on every single veteran's door," he said. "But if you meet us halfway, we'll meet you the other half. Basically, you have to take that step and we'll do the rest." He said it was also about encouraging veterans to try out the different resources available to them. "It's definitely worth a shot and there's a lot of benefits out there for vets, but you got to come get it," he said.

The next item Royer brought up was suicide awareness and prevention for veterans. A presentation on the topic had been given by Sebastian Shaw of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs during the October meeting. Shaw explained that factors which heightened the threat of suicide were economic disparities, race/ethnicity/LGBT disparities, homelessness, isolation, and health problems, including COVID-19.

Ronald Downes, who works with the Bronx VA as a community engagement and partnerships coordinator for suicide prevention, attended the November meeting and said it was important to get veterans involved with the VA to reduce the likelihood of suicide.

"So, we know that of all the veterans that die annually by suicide, about two thirds have not had any contact with the VA system," he said, adding that creating partnerships and coalitions with community members to help end veteran suicide could help in this regard.

At one point, CB7 committee member, Jean Hill, mentioned the passing of veteran and former veterans committee member, Jeffrey Hunter. She asked if there was a way to find out where he had been laid to rest to allow people to pay their respects. Kingston offered to reach out to Hunter's next of kin through the VA for information.

Later in the meeting, Royer

also mentioned both Hunter's death, as well as the recent passing of former Veterans Affairs committee chair, Carmen Miranda. "I want to thank them for the help that they provided me, the confidence, and what they've provided to some of our other board members, and members of the public," he said.

Anthony Riveccio, veteran and former veterans committee member, then raised the topic of a World War I monument on Moshulu Parkway that is in need of restoration. He said it would be nice to have it fixed up in celebration of Veterans Day. Royer said the matter would be discussed at the next meeting.

Before closing, Royer asked about having a meeting in December or waiting until January. Hill said, in her opinion, they should wait until January, when Bronx Borough President-elect, Vanessa Gibson, is instated. "I have to think that she will have a full committee to work with veterans," she said.

"So, I think we wait until January. We bring her into the fold.... also find out what services that she can offer or how she can help the people at Fordham Village, and even some of the veterans that are living in other areas," Hill added. The committee members agreed to hold the next meeting in January after the holidays.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

Suicide is preventable. Veterans who are in emotional distress and are showing warning signs of suicide can be connected to the 24-hour Veterans Crisis Line. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, use the online chat, or text to 838255. Sebastian Shaw can be reached at Sebastian.shaw@va.gov.

For more information about the Center for Development and Civic Engagement at the Bronx VA, email Shawn.Kingston@va.gov.

To inquire about services available through the Jericho Project program, call (646) 970-7170 or email ssvf@jerichoproject.org.

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