



NORWOOD NEWS

Vol 37, No 14 • PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION • JULY 11-24, 2024

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NORWOOD PRIDE DEBUTS



By **EMILY SAWAKED**

The inaugural “Norwood Pride” festival took place on Sunday, June 23, in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood. Its launch was rather ceremonious in that not only did local elected officials, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), and City Council Member Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), show up to celebrate with the local community, but so too did Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson.

Pride Month is celebrated nationally in June to commemorate the years of struggle for civil rights dating back to the 1969 Stonewall Uprising. Joining principal organizers of the event, Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC) and the Jerome Gun Hill BID, the three elected officials who, along with Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr., were among the long list of event sponsors, braved the sweltering heat which hov-

(continued on page 15)

Matthew López-Jensen

MATTHEW LÓPEZ-JENSEN, AND his husband, Jesús attend the inaugural Norwood Pride Festival held in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood, The Bronx, on Sunday, June 23, 2024.



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NORWOOD NEWS

Vol. 37, No. 14

Norwood News is published biweekly on Thursdays by Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)
3400 Reservoir Oval East
Bronx, New York 10467
Phone: 718 324 4998
Fax: 718 324 2917
E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org
Web.: www.norwoodnews.org

Publisher

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Editor-In-Chief, Norwood News

Sile Moloney
smoloney@norwoodnews.org

Reporter

Ariel Pacheco

Intern

Ashley Castillo

Regular Contributors

David Greene, Miriam Quiñones, Claire Garon

Contributor

Claire Garon

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Bronx Daycare Provider Gets 25 Years for Child Abuse & Pornography

By **SILE MOLONEY**

Silfredo Castillo Martinez, owner of the closed “Lina’s Garden Daycare,” located at 3525 Decatur Avenue in Norwood, was sentenced in federal court on June 27 to 25 years in prison and lifetime supervised release for producing child pornography with a minor victim who was under his care.

As reported, on March 21, federal officials said Castillo Martinez, 34, pled guilty to sexual exploitation of a child, and production of child pornography. Reacting to the sentencing, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York Damian Williams said, “Silfredo Castillo Martinez exploited the trust placed in him as a daycare provider by sexually abusing one of the minor children under his care and recording that abuse. This lengthy prison sentence holds Castillo Martinez accountable for his horrific crimes and the extraordinary harm and trauma he caused.”

The court heard that from about July 2015 through about May 3, 2022, Castillo Martinez, ran the licensed children’s daycare facility at his home. From about May 2018 through about July 2018, he induced an 11-year-old minor who attended the daycare to engage in sexually explicit conduct with him at the facility while Castillo Martinez recorded the conduct on his cellphone and camera.

On about May 3, 2022, law enforcement raided Castillo Martinez’s home seizing several electronic devices containing, among other things child pornography of the victim and around 9,800 other images of child pornography.

As reported, after Castillo Martinez’s arrest, according to its website, the center remained “temporarily closed.” Under the testimonial section of the website, there was one review 3 years ago by “Imtiaz A,” who wrote, “Good place.”

As reported, “ACS” (NYC Administration for Children’s Services) had been printed on the awning over the now closed Lina’s Garden Daycare, which had been advertised as a “private” daycare which accepted “government vouchers.” The awning has since been removed. We asked ACS in June 2022 what oversight or involvement it had with the center as regards screening, licensing, or oversight.

We were initially informed that ACS was *not* the agency responsible for licensing or regulating childcare programs, though ACS *does* provide eligible families with childcare vouchers which they can use to enroll their child at any childcare location of their choosing which accepts such vouchers.

According to ACS’s website, the “EarlyLearn” programs were “now” managed by NYC Department of Education (DOE). *Norwood News* followed up with DOE about Lina’s Garden Daycare at the time and asked what oversight DOE had carried out on the center. A DOE rep-



Photo courtesy of the NYPD

SILFREDO A. CASTILLO MARTINEZ, 32, of Decatur Avenue got 25 years after pleading guilty to crimes relating to child sexual exploitation and pornography at Lina’s Garden Daycare, located at 3525 Decatur Avenue in The Bronx from July 2015 to May 2022 approximately.

representative replied, saying, “This is not a DOE site.”

Asked if DOE could provide details, **generally**, of its daycare oversight and screening process, the representative said, “Only if it is a DOE-contracted program. You have to go to DOHMH (NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene) and ACS who have more oversight of this than we do.”

Norwood News contacted ACS once again therefore and this time, we were referred to DOHMH. Michael Lanza, a DOHMH representative, referred us to their website which details their screening process and offered to answer any questions we had.

An extract from DOHMH’s website reads in part, “If you are visiting a group child care center, you should review its child care performance summary card (<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/dc/example-performance-summary-card.pdf>) for information about the program’s staff, size, and past violations. The card will be located near the program’s entrance.”

It continued, “Child care operators looking for information about permitting and regulations should visit our Information for Child Care Operators page (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/business-permits-and-licenses/children-and-adolescents-childcare.page>).

If you are interested in applying for free or low-cost child care, first find out if you are eligible (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/early-care/eligibility.page>). There are several types of child care programs available in the city (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/childcare-types-of-childcare.page>), so consider your family’s needs and choose carefully. When searching for a program, be sure to review a facility’s history and its performance record.” We asked if DOHMH had screened Lina’s Garden Daycare Center specifically. We did not receive a response.

According to information posted at the former site of Lina’s Garden Daycare on March 21 this year, a new daycare center was scheduled to open “soon” at the same location called “*El Jardín de Niños*” [The Children’s Garden].

Norwood News called the number for the new center on March 29 and asked if it was open and were informed it was not. We asked if a new date for the opening was known and were informed it was not. Asked if we were speaking to the new owner, the person said, “Yes.”

We asked the new owner if she had been affiliated with the previous owner, the person said, “No. I don’t know nothing about that.” Asked if she knew Castillo-Martinez, she said, “No.” We asked what agency had screened the new daycare. The woman replied, “No, I can’t give you any information. Call another time.”

In April this year, we asked DOHMH more about its role as regards childcare centers, if it had screened Lina’s Garden Daycare, if it had received an application for the new daycare center, *El Jardín de Niños*, and what oversight, if any, had been performed on the new applicant.

At that point we were informed, “The NYC Health Department oversees home-based childcare on behalf of the [State]. There is no one currently holding a license to operate a childcare at that location and no pending license application.”

We followed up once again to ask if DOHMH screened Lina’s Garden Daycare and to ask if in the meantime, any applications have since been filed to operate a daycare at 3525 Decatur Avenue under any name. We will share any updates we receive.

Officials from the District Attorney’s office said more details will be forthcoming shortly regarding separate State charges against the defendant. They previously said of Castillo Martinez, “Anyone who may have been a victim of the defendant or has information about victims is encouraged to call the NYPD Bronx Child Abuse Squad at (929) 265-3638.”

For additional information on child daycare and for similar information in different languages, visit: <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/dc/daycare-choosingchildcare.pdf>. Residents can find out about past issues at a child care facility by visiting: <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareList.action> or the State’s Office of Children and Family Services page at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/looking/ccfs-search.php>. If you think a childcare facility may be unsanitary, unsafe, or illegal, **call 311**. If you think a child may be in immediate danger, **call 911**. To read our previous coverage of residents’ reaction to Castillo Martinez’s arrest, visit www.norwoodnews.org.

Dandies Ice Cream



of snacks available such as cakes and cookies. Dandies Ice Cream shop started out of a need to offer a space for children in the Wakefield / White Plains Road area. The commercial corridor is home to a variety of delis, hair salons, and barber shops yet lacks a realm solely for kids. Dandies Ice Cream Shop also provides a vital safety zone for kids to go to feel safe, comfortable, and have fun. In the future Dandies Ice Cream hopes to also provide hotdogs and popcorn for the kids as well. Sheryl has been in the White Plains Road commercial corridor for well over two decades. Originally working for another business that was displaced by Blink

Sheryl Straw, owner of Dandies Ice Cream on 3632 White Plains Rd, Bronx, NY 10467, has a whirlwind of a story when it comes to how she started her small business. Dandies Ice Cream Shop offers ice cream for everyone but focuses on a select number of specialty Caribbean flavors. Flavors include chocolate vanilla, rum raisin, pistachio, and vanilla. In addition, there are also a plethora

Fitness, Sheryl realized why not branch out on her own? When Sheryl first opened a business, it was a tough few day, but as time went on, she got into a routine. It was like working for someone else, but the stakes were high. Sheryl's first venture was with a beauty supply store until she moved on to selling ice cream. Sheryl is hoping to become a community staple in the years to come.

B&R Uniforms and Big Apple Health Food

Ram Ramsamugh (Father) and Rishi Ramsamugh (Son) run two stores on White Plains Road. Owners of B&R Uniforms and Big Apple Health Food, Rishi discusses what it is like to operate a family run small business. Rishi highlights "you see how crucial small businesses are to the community, small businesses add to the personal connections where you are. You see many familiar faces daily and connect on a human level." Rishi goes on to discuss how a personal connection with individuals is not only valuable to build customer base but builds a stronger sense of community identity. Rishi mentions how it is crucial to stay connected with the neighborhood, and important for small business owners to constantly try to tap in. The goal of a small business is to support the neighborhood and grow with it. When asked if being a small business owner offers a flexible lifestyle, Rishi states "yes and no there is a level of flexibility, but the dedication to the business and community is crucial when



a family is running it." Big Apple Health Food (4141 White Plains Rd, Bronx, NY 10466) and B&R Uniforms (4139 White Plains Rd, Bronx, NY 10466) were first established in 1982. Big Apple Health Food centers around natural products. While B&R Uniforms supplies nurse, paramedic, and doctor uniforms. B&R Uniforms has regularly donated scrubs to Africa and the Caribbean. With over 40 years of community ties and experience, Big Apple Health Food and B&R Uniforms are hot spots to check out on White Plains Road.

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INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the common practice of opening fire hydrants to cool off in summer and to wash cars.



"Oh, that's not nice! Sometimes, in the building the water gets dirty, and the pressure gets low, and we can't get water. They have to stop these people from opening the hydrants. The fire department caps should be on every hydrant."

Willie Longo,
Bedford Park
(Photo by David Greene)



"Opening the hydrants is a problem on the block because all the guys line up with their cars. They wash their cars; it's like a meet-up spot and that hydrant is constantly on for car washing on a regular basis. There was a cap on it, but they have something that they do themselves to it. It's like they take it off and put it back on. Obviously, if there's a fire there's not going to be any water. I would like to see it the way it's supposed to be, and not abused."

Barbara Shoulars,
Bedford Park
(Photo by David Greene)



"I think it's a bad idea. First of all, it is so bad to see the wasting of water when in other countries they're dying for water. It's so sad; it hurts me to see them do that because water is so precious that we have to conserve it. So, I think it's a good idea to stop this. The police need to issue summonses to penalize these people."

Marco Miro,
Norwood
(Photo by David Greene)



"Assuming people are responsible and close the hydrant when they are done, I am okay with it. I don't have an issue with it. An open fire hydrant is a staple in the 'hood,' especially when it's hot. As long as there isn't a drought, and water is not scarce, it should be fine. I am also in favor of young individuals hustling to make some extra cash. Washing cars on the block has given some local kids much needed direction and kept them out of trouble."

Jason Gonzalez,
Olinville
(Photo courtesy of Jason Gonzalez)



"They can be opened with sprinkler caps but as we enter a heatwave, people will need to cool down. Anyone can get a sprinkler cap at any firehouse and are encouraged to get them and use them. People are discouraged from using a sprinkler cap because it lowers water pressure and can cause a delay if there's a fire. I think the fire department does a lot to prevent this from happening."

Sam Esposito,
Ozone Park, Queens
(Photo courtesy of Sam Esposito)

Editor's Note: When Norwood News queried with the FDNY whether there was a danger of a water shortage in the event of a fire when hydrants are left open, they said in part, "Fire hydrants are connected to the water mains of NYC. A fire hydrant can never be empty. Technically, every fire hydrant is empty until one of our members utilizes the appropriate tool to allow it to flow water. While missing [fire hydrant] side covers pose a threat to the community [due to the sheer force of the gushing water from the hydrant in the case where a sprinkler is NOT used to reduce such water pressure], it has more to do with litter bugs disposing of garbage within hydrants that can later clog up the hose lines we use to supply water. When you look inside a fire hydrant, it should not have water pooling within it. In fact, water pooling inside of a hydrant not being used is more of an indication of a problem than an empty hydrant."



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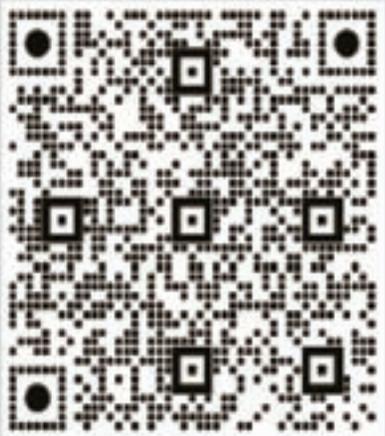
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Bronx River Swims Expose Potential Danger to Kids

By DAVID GREENE

Having been informed of apparently unsupervised swims by children and teens in the Bronx River over the last several years, *Norwood News* can confirm that groups are indeed swimming in the river.

On Friday, June 21, as The Weather Channel reported that the temperature in The Bronx reached 90 degrees on the first full day of summer, more than a dozen children were observed swimming and horsing around in the Bronx River's murky waters, a few hundred feet from the Burke Avenue Bridge, which connects Norwood to Olinville.

In an area just north of the Burke Avenue footbridge called the Bronx River Forest, a dozen children and young people, who all appeared to be under the age of 18, swam and played in the water, as another half dozen children sat on nearby rocks.

Four adults could be seen a distance away from the river, two sitting in lounge chairs and two others standing near a table, unable to clearly see the children. A boombox was heard blasting music.

One man, who was walking over the Burke Avenue Bridge and was headed toward the Allerton Ballfields and French Charley's Playground with his young son was asked if he had ever seen children swimming unsupervised in the river. The man replied, "Yeah, sometimes I do."

Asked if he had ever seen Parks department employees or police chase the kids away, the man replied, "No, never seen that." He added, "I think I saw a kid leaving just now." The child in question, dripping wet, was observed putting his sneakers

on after taking a swim.

When told that a dozen children and young people were currently swimming in the water, the man responded, "Every summer, yeah. I've never seen anyone complain or anything." The man was asked how long he had known about the kids' swimming spot. He said since 2015, since he moved to the area.

"And it's been like that every summer, probably before that too," the man continued. Unaware of recent drowning tragedies in the Bronx River at East 180th Street in West Farms and in Starlight Park in Soundview, the man added, "I've seen a lot worse things in the park so I really hadn't thought about that too much."

As the man was speaking, two young men on mopeds sped past on the nearby footpath at a high rate of speed, coming within a couple feet of striking him.

Meanwhile, the tipster who informed *Norwood News* of the kids' and young adults' regular swimming spot in the Bronx River was asked how long he had been aware of it. He said, "At least three or four years."

Asked if he'd ever seen an adult supervising the youngsters while they swam, he responded, "Nope. I think they cut school and go there." The tipster added, "They jump; there's like a little platform where it's falling apart. If you walk back there, you can see it all. It's like a ledge; they jump off of it. I just don't understand why they don't do something about it."

The tipster, a long-time resident of Norwood, was asked if he had ever seen police officers or parks officials crack down



Photo by David Greene

NEARLY A DOZEN children and young people who all appeared to be under the age of 18 swim and play in the Bronx River on Friday, June 21, 2024.

on the seemingly unsupervised swims. He responded, "No."

When contacted for comment, an unnamed NYPD spokesperson told *Norwood News*, "There are no designated patrols for swimming in those areas of the 52nd Precinct." He added, "There have not been any summonses issued this year in regard to swimming in the river."

On Friday, June 20, 2014, Erickson Villa and Wellington Gavin, both 13, drowned in the Bronx River at Starlight Park in Soundview after jumping into the river from a boat dock.

On July 18, 2010, Crystal Reyes, 15, was swimming in the Bronx River in River Park at East 180th Street in West Farms when she began to have trouble staying afloat. Her friend, David Luccioni, 17, dove in to assist. Tragically, both teens drowned. On the same day that year, a near-drowning was reported at Van Cortlandt Park Pool. Police shut down the pool for the remainder of the day.

According to figures from New York State Department of Health (DOH), there were 51 drownings reported in New York City between 1987 and 2022. The DOH also reported 151 drownings in New York State in 2021, the latest year for which figures are available.

Of the 151 drownings reported, just four took place at a public bathing facility during normal hours of operation. In 2020, DOH reported 159 drownings, with just three occurring at a public bathing facility during normal hours of operation.

With an unusually warm start to the summer season, drownings have already been reported in Coney Island in Brooklyn and in The Rockaways in Queens. On Wednesday, July 17, a 66-year-old man

suffered a near drowning when he was pulled from the waters at Orchard Beach.

Norwood News contacted NYC Department of Parks and Recreation for comment on the seemingly unsupervised swims. The department has been campaigning for many years to encourage New Yorkers to learn to become lifeguards amid a citywide shortage that has left Van Cortlandt Park Pool sometimes only partially opened in recent years due to one lifeguard not being sufficient to supervise the whole pool. We did not receive an immediate response from Parks.

Meanwhile, after recently advertizing various swimming and pool events on specific days for seniors and kids, Van Cortlandt Park Pool announced ahead of the 4th of July holiday weekend that the pool was closed until further notice due ongoing mechanical issues.

As reported, in early January, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul unveiled NY SWIMS, the "New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming" program. "Access to swimming isn't just about recreation; it's about public health and climate resiliency," the governor said. "NY SWIMS will be the largest statewide investment in swimming since the New Deal, expanding access for underserved communities and improving safety for kids across New York."

Recognizing that drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4, and that climate change will increase extreme heat events, the governor said NY SWIMS would build out municipal pools in high-need areas, connect New Yorkers to the State's rivers and lakes, deploy pools in urban environments, and invest

in State parks and pools.

Hochul said the program will also promote initiatives to help more New Yorkers swim safely by addressing the statewide lifeguard shortage, increasing swimming instruction, and increasing amenities at pools and beaches.

State officials went on to say that NY SWIMS will "deliver \$150 million in grant funding for localities to build out 10 new, landmark, public swimming pools in areas most in need, drive innovation in pool designs, and deploy pop-up, above-ground pools to combat extreme heat." They said NY SWIMS will reverse decades of disinvestment to ensure public parks offer new, state-of-the-art swimming facilities which can serve thousands of daily visitors.

They also said the State will partner with New York City to bring the vision of +Pool, a filtered floating pool which can sit in New York's rivers, to life by jointly funding a demonstration project which will ensure this innovative model can safely provide access for swimmers. *Norwood News* has reached out to the Parks department for more information and will share any updates we receive on www.norwoodnews.org.

As also reported, given the ongoing shortage of local public swimming pools in Bronx Community District 7, *Norwood News* previously asked NYC Department of Education (DOE) if the recently renovated DeWitt Clinton high school pool would be open to the public, as well as to students. We were informed that all operational pools can be used by non-school parties outside of school hours, including during the summer via an extended use permit, if not in use by the school or another program.

We were further informed that there are associated costs with extended use permits that cover supervision and operation of the pool and building. We asked DOE how the public could find out exactly how and when they could use the school's pool, as well as the associated costs. We did not receive an immediate response. We will share any future updates we receive.

Those wishing to sign-up to become a lifeguard, can visit nyc.gov/park/lifeguards.

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*



Photo by David Greene

AT LEAST TWO men who were observed standing near a table with a cooler and with a radio blasting music did not appear to be able to clearly see through the trees the nearby children and young people swimming in the the Bronx River on Friday, June 21, 2024. It is unknown if all were part of the same group or not.

NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & ASHLEY CASTILLO**

COVID-19 Cases on the Rise in NYC

COVID-19 cases have been increasing in New York City, according to the City's health department. Health officials have recommended to New Yorkers that they consider wearing a mask, especially in crowded indoor settings, and especially for those over 65, or who are at high risk due to a medical condition of severe COVID-19, or who are around others who are at high risk. See <http://on.nyc.gov/3U2bq5n> for more information.

AOC Introduces Articles of Impeachment Against 2 SCOTUS Judges

Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) introduced articles of impeachment on July 10 against U.S. Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, lifetime appointees, saying the "unchecked corruption crisis on the Supreme Court has now spiraled into a Constitutional crisis threatening American democracy writ large." She said the two judges' "pattern of refusal to recuse from consequential matters before the court in which they hold widely documented financial and personal entanglements constitutes a grave threat to American rule of law, the integrity of our democracy, and one of the clearest cases for which the tool of impeachment was designed."

Ocasio-Cortez said their "repeated failure over decades to disclose that they received millions of dollars in gifts from individuals with business before the court is explicitly against the law and their refusal to recuse from the specific matters and cases before the court in which their benefactors and spouses are implicated represents nothing less than a constitutional crisis."

In addition to other actions taken to address the situation, she said that on June 25, congressional lawmakers introduced the *High Court Gift Ban Act* to prohibit Supreme Court justices from receiving gifts valued at more than \$50, bringing them in line with Members of Congress and other federal officials. The move follows recent allegations of undisclosed gifts received by both judges. *Norwood News* has reached out to the United States Supreme Court for comment and will share any feedback we receive on www.norwoodnews.org.

Memorial Service Held for Slain Police Officer

A memorial ceremony was held outside the 46th Precinct stationhouse on July 5 to honor the late NYPD Detective Miosotis Familia, who had been

assigned to the 46th Precinct when she was fatally shot by parolee Alexander Bonds on July 5, 2017, while sitting in her police vehicle after completing an overnight shift. Bonds was reported to have had a history of mental illness according to the Detectives' Endowment Association and had posted on social media about killing police before the incident. They said he was shot by responding police after a foot pursuit.

Family members, NYPD representatives, residents, and elected officials gathered outside the 46th Precinct stationhouse, located on Ryer Avenue in Fordham Heights, on July 5 for the remembrance ceremony. A wall-size mural of Familia was painted on the stationhouse some years ago.

As reported by *Norwood News* at the time, a street renaming in Familia's memory was also held on Ryer Avenue and East 181st Street on July 5, 2018, attended by many, including Familia's mother, Adriana Valoy, and her three children, Genesis Vilella, who was 20 when her mother died and twins, Peter and Delilah, who were 12 at the time of her death.

According to Blue Lives Matter, after 27 years, two months, and two days on the job, NYPD Detective Vincent Maher returned in November 2020 to the 46th Precinct, where his career started, to sign out for the last time. Before he left, he took some time to go back to East 183rd Street and Creston Avenue in Fordham Heights, where his former partner, Familia, then a police officer, was shot. Accompanying him on that occasion was Genesis who, prior to that day, had never been at the site where her mother's life was taken.

Familia, a 12-year veteran with the NYPD, a single mother and carer for her elderly mother at the time of her passing, was promoted posthumously to Detective First Grade by Former Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill. She was the first female NYPD officer to die in the line of duty since 9/11 according to Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), who attended the service.



Photo courtesy of the NYPD
NYPD DETECTIVE MIOSOTIS Familia.



Photo courtesy of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz
NYPD REPRESENTATIVES AND elected officials join Genesis Vilella, daughter of the late NYPD Det. Miosotis Familia at a memorial outside the 46th Precinct on Ryer Avenue in Fordham Heights on July 5, 2024.

New York Lieutenant Gov. Calls on Biden to Drop Out

In what has been seen by some as a stunning break with NY Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has supported embattled Democratic U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to stay in the 2024 presidential race, NY Lieutenant Gov. Antonio Delgado joined a minority of Democrats on Wednesday, July 10, in calling for the president to drop out of the race. Delgado commended Biden for defeating former Republican U.S. President Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election, and for leading the country out of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying he deserved the country's eternal gratitude. He did not propose an alternative candidate, just one who would "re-energize" voters. Delgado added that he had "immense respect and gratitude" for

the 81-year-old president, whose first debate performance on June 27 against Trump was widely panned.

According to polling, some voters and Democrats are concerned with the president's age, his ability to win the race, which some Democrats also fear will affect their own standing, and his ability to lead the country for another four years. Meanwhile, some young voters have long been critical of Biden's support of Israel in the war with Hamas., notwithstanding that it was the U.S. Congress which passed the recent \$95 billion aid package for both Israel and Ukraine. Democratic Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15) recently tweeted, in part, of the debacle, "Regardless of where one stands on the question of President Biden's political future, the intra-party mixed messaging strikes me as deeply self-destructive."

Tenants and Elected Officials Gather To Protest Conditions at Tracey Towers

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Around 50 frustrated tenants joined local elected officials for a rally outside Bedford Park's Tracey Towers on Saturday, June 15, to protest what they said are poor living conditions in the 871-unit housing complex. Residents say they have been grappling with a slew of problems like frequent water leaks, a significant rat infestation, and perpetually malfunctioning elevators for a number of years.

Jean Hill, president of the Tracey Towers Tenant Organization said residents just dealt with a water shut-off that lasted 24 hours. "People are traumatized by the conditions," she said. "We've had rats running through the building, water leaks in some of the apartments, the pipes are breaking down. We need a full modernization of our elevators because Tracey Towers is 50 years old, and we need to make sure we have space for our tenants to live comfortably."

Designed by architect, Paul Rudolph, Tracey Towers is made up of two, high-rise towers, comprising units of various sizes, including one-bedroom and two-

bedroom apartments. It is part of NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development (HPD)'s Mitchell Lama affordable rental and cooperative program for moderate and middle-income families, the 2nd largest Bronx co-op, according to HPD. It is home to a large Ghanaian community, among other residents.

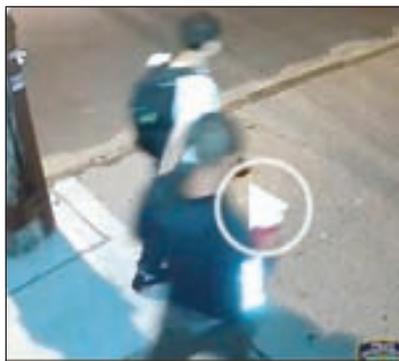
Joseph B. Danquah II, a Tracey Towers resident since 1997, said the water leaks have flooded the community room, making it difficult for tenants to gather and organize. He says these are issues residents have had even pre-COVID. "Part of the challenge in getting more tenants down here [to the rally] is due to the lack of access to a place where we can meet as a community," he said.

"The one thing that's more pressing, probably for a lot of tenants, is the elevator issue. There's supposed to be 12 elevators, but each building hardly ever has access to even three elevators," Danquah II continued. According to residents, a delivery worker previously got stuck in a Tracey Towers elevator for several hours some years ago when it broke down.

(continued on page 10)

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY & DAVID GREENE



Kingsbridge Heights: Person Sought for Stabbing

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying screenshot above who they say is wanted for questioning about an assault that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Monday, July 1, at around 4.30 a.m., a 38-year-old male victim was walking on the sidewalk in front of 3011 Albany Crescent when two unidentified individuals approached him.

They said one of the two proceeded to repeatedly stab the victim multiple times about the body before fleeing on foot southbound on Heath Avenue. They said the victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition. Police said the suspect is described as male, has a medium complexion, and was last seen wearing all dark clothing.



Olinville: Senior Hospitalized after Assault & Robbery

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo who they say are sought for questioning in connection to a robbery and assault that occurred in Olinville in the early hours of Saturday morning, June 29.

Police said that at around 00.35 a.m., two unidentified people entered a business located at 688 East Gun Hill Road. They said they stole property and were attempting to exit the store when they were confronted by a 63-year-old male victim. They said a struggle ensued and one of the two punched the victim in the head, causing him to lose consciousness.

Police said the suspects fled on foot to parts unknown and the victim was transported by EMS to Maimonides Medical Center in stable condition.



Bedford Park: Group Sought for Robbery of 62-Year-Old Woman

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the three people seen in the accompanying screenshots above who they say are wanted for questioning in connection to a robbery that occurred in Bedford Park in mid-June. Police said that on Monday, June 17, at around 7.05 a.m., a 62-year-old female victim was approached by an unknown person at the southeast corner of Goulden Avenue and West Bedford Park Boulevard.

They said the suspect walked up to the victim from behind, grabbed her and tossed her to the ground, stealing her purse. They said the suspect then fled in a four-door sedan with two other people to parts unknown. No injuries were reported at the time of the incident police said.



Kingsbridge Heights: Man Slashed in Face on West Kingsbridge Road

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is wanted in connection to an assault that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Saturday, July 6, at around 9.29 a.m., a 27-year-old male victim was in front of 251 West Kingsbridge Road when an unidentified person approached him from behind.

They said the suspect displayed a knife and slashed the victim in the face, before fleeing the location on foot northbound on Bailey Avenue, and that EMS transported the victim to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition.

Police said the suspect is described as male, he has a medium complexion, a slim build, and is around 5 feet, 6 inches tall. They said he was last seen wearing a black t-shirt with a Levi's logo, black sweatpants, black Crocs, and had a black fanny pack.

| CompStat Book | | Week of 07/01/24 - 07/07/24 | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 28 Day | | | Year to Date | | |
| | % Chg | 2024 | 2023 | % Chg | 2024 | 2023 | % Chg |
| Murder | 0.0 % | 0 | 2 | -100.0 % | 6 | 3 | 100.0 % |
| Rape | 0.0 % | 0 | 4 | -100.0 % | 25 | 17 | 47.1 % |
| Robbery | -41.7 % | 32 | 44 | -27.3 % | 247 | 225 | 9.8 % |
| Felony Assault | 0.0 % | 78 | 57 | 36.8 % | 364 | 331 | 16.0 % |
| Burglary | 200.0 % | 12 | 11 | 9.1 % | 96 | 119 | -19.3 % |
| Grand Larceny | 25.0 % | 59 | 49 | 20.4 % | 388 | 363 | 6.9 % |
| Grand Larceny Auto | 0.0 % | 20 | 18 | 11.1 % | 173 | 167 | 3.6 % |
| Total | 0.0 % | 201 | 185 | 8.6 % | 1,319 | 1,225 | 7.7 % |
| Patrol | 0.0 % | 198 | 184 | 7.6 % | 1,291 | 1,196 | 7.9 % |
| Transit | 0.0 % | 3 | 1 | 200.0 % | 24 | 26 | -7.7 % |
| Housing | 0.0 % | 0 | 0 | 0.0 % | 4 | 3 | 33.3 % |
| Shooting Victims | 200.0 % | 4 | 1 | 300.0 % | 19 | 8 | 137.5 % |
| Shooting Incidents | 100.0 % | 3 | 1 | 200.0 % | 12 | 8 | 50.0 % |
| UCR Rape* | 0.0 % | 3 | 4 | -25.0 % | 37 | 27 | 37.0 % |
| Other Sex Crimes | 33.3 % | 11 | 8 | 37.5 % | 65 | 53 | 22.6 % |
| Petit Larceny | 11.1 % | 115 | 210 | -45.2 % | 946 | 1,335 | -29.1 % |
| Mod. Assault | 85.7 % | 101 | 66 | 53.0 % | 443 | 430 | 4.2 % |
| Hate Crimes | 0.0 % | 0 | 0 | 0.0 % | 1 | 0 | -% |
| Traffic Fatalities | 0.0 % | 0 | 1 | -100.0 % | 3 | 4 | -25.0 % |

ON THE LEFT major crime statistics in the 52nd Precinct for the 28-day period ending July 7, 2024, compared to the same timeframe in 2023, and on the right, year-to-date major crimes in the 52nd Precinct as of July 7, 2024, compared to the same timeframe in 2023. Source: NYPD All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17. Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law ("NYSPL") definitions. *Uniformed Crime Reporting ("UCR") Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape

Man Gets 7 Years for Sex & Gun Crimes

Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark announced on July 2 that a Florida man was sentenced to seven years in prison after pleading guilty to gun possession, attempted rape and attempted criminal sexual act against fellow inmates while being held at Rikers Island. The same man said he was hired to kill former Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Clark said the defendant, Christopher Cano, 30, formerly of Miami, Florida, was sentenced on July 1 to seven years in prison and five years post release supervision on second-degree criminal possession of a weapon; three and a half years in prison, and five years post release supervision on attempted rape in the first degree, and three and a half years in prison and five years post release supervision on attempted criminal sexual act in the first degree. She said the sentences are to run concurrently and that Cano pleaded guilty to the charges on Dec. 4, 2023.

The court heard that on July 24, 2016, Cano was spotted at the Bronx Annual Dominican Day Parade on the Grand Concourse with a gun in his waistband.

Police were notified, they followed and stopped him. When questioned, Cano said that he had a bomb in his shoe. He was immediately arrested and found to be in possession of a loaded .38 caliber firearm.

Cano also said he was paid \$5,000 to kill then Diaz Jr., now senior VP of strategic initiatives at Montefiore, who was present at the parade. The court also heard that on Oct. 19, 2020, while being held on Rikers Island, Cano walked into the shower area where the victim was and raped her. Prosecutors said that on May 4, 2021, Cano offered to help another inmate on Rikers with his criminal case. Once inside the man's cell, Cano forced the victim to engage in sex acts.

Norwood News reached out to Diaz Jr. for comment on Cano's sentencing. He had no comment.

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

Additional Primary Election Results & Voter Reaction

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

In addition to the Election Night unofficial results reported in our previous print edition on June 27, listed below are some additional unofficial Election Night race results in Bronx County following the Democratic Primaries on June 25, as well as some voter reaction.

In the County Committee 009/81 Democratic primary, Ramdat Singh, Nancy Weinstein Valdez, and Deborah Yanover all tied with 27.78 percent of the vote on Election Night. Three positions are available in this race. In the County Committee 014/81 Democratic primary, Phyllis Roth, Bonnie Geller-Geld, Laura Fieber, and E. Doyle-McCarthy were the top four leading candidates. Four positions are available in this race.

In the County Committee 017/81 Democratic primary, Elisha Ignatoff, Susan Goldy, Scott Wasserman, and Meghan Wasserman were the top four candidates leading the race. Four positions are available in this race.

In the County Committee 020/81 Democratic primary, Stephanie Halpin, Betsey Knapp, Michael Heller, and Maryann Monte were the top four leading candidates. Four positions are available in this race.

In the County Committee 023/81 Democratic primary, Abigail Martin, Martin O'Neill, and Stephen Friedmann were the top three leading candidates. Three positions are available in this race.

In the District Leader for Assembly District 84 Democratic primary, Amanda Septimo and Yolanda Garcia led on Elec-

tion Night with 38.83 percent and 26.75 of the vote, respectively. Two positions are available in this race. Assembly District 84 is also represented by Assemblywoman Septimo, and covers much of the Concourse, Mott Haven, Port Morris, and Hunts Point in the South Bronx.

In the State Committee for A.D 84 Democratic primary, Sonia Taylor and Robert Barnes led with 51.18 and 26.74 percent of the vote respectively. Two positions are available in this race.

In the District Leader for Assembly District 77 Democratic primary, Evelyn Rivera and Rashad Brown led with 43.09 and 29.41 percent of the vote respectively. Two positions are available in this race. Assembly District 77 is represented by Assemblyman Landon Dais, who won his seat in a special election earlier this year. The district roughly covers some or all of the neighborhoods of Morris Heights, Concourse, and Mt. Hope.

Norwood News spoke to some voters at P.S. 207 in Kingsbridge, located at 3030 Godwin Terrace on Election Day. Vanessa, who is in her forties and a mother to John, said there weren't many voters inside the polling station when she went to vote so she didn't have to wait long, and added that she faced no issues with the voting booths.

Asked if she wanted to disclose who she voted for, she said, "I will say there were a lot of names that I didn't recognize. So, I did vote for people that were part of this community, both Kingsbridge and Riverdale, that I've seen or interacted with. Primarily, I would say Dinowitz, Abigail Martin, [Sai?] and Aaron [Stayman] because I've seen them

either at the pantry [or] at events, local events, and things like that."

Vanessa continued, "They always looked at either education, economics and crime around this neighborhood." Vanessa said these were the three issues she was most interested in seeing addressed by elected officials. She said her son, John, 20, was a first-time voter though he had not cast his ballot at that stage.

John said, "I don't want to make a blind vote. It's a small election, so the vote actually matters. So, I need time... I wish I knew more about Steve [?] you know? There's been a lot of anti-Bowman [Rep. Jamaal Bowman NY-16] commercials that I've been seeing, and I know they had a whole rally."

Vanessa and John said they initially believed the primary elections were just for congressional races and didn't realize until they got to the polls that there were other local races in which they could vote. *Norwood News* was told by Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) that some of their residents said the same thing. *Norwood News* reached out to NYC Board of Elections for comment.

We also spoke to Miguelina and her son Joshua, both from Marble Hill, at the same polling site. Like Vanessa and John, they experienced no wait time and felt they were able to make it to the booths quickly and without any issues. They declined to share who they voted for, but both expressed how important it was to vote, simply because they said they have "a right to in this democracy."

Miguelina said, "Democracy is very important to me." Joshua concurred, adding how being a member of the LG-BTQ+ community contributed to his desire to vote. Miguelina said her top voting issues for this year were women's rights, social security, and housing. Joshua added of New York politicians who he did not name specifically, "They're not working with the president [Biden]. They're helping the former president [Trump]. They're doing something good for him."

Meanwhile, Maureen, 67, a resident of Kingsbridge, said she did not experience any delays waiting in line to voter either. She said she felt informed about this year's candidates due to the campaigning she had witnessed around The Bronx. While discussing the importance of voting, she said, "Everybody should vote. Otherwise, someone else is going to say what you should have said, and you end up getting what they want, not what you want."

Maureen also mentioned that housing and law enforcement were two things she was expecting to be addressed in the context of this year's elections and highlighted her desire for representation on these matters.

Glad Tidings Church, which has been used as a polling station in the past and which is located at 2 Van Cortlandt Avenue East in Bedford Park, was closed on Primary Election Day. A few people who were passing by did not know where



Photo by Emily Sawaked

VOTER, MAUREEN, FROM Norwood, speaks to *Norwood News* outside her local polling station in Kingsbridge, after voting on Primary Election Day, June 25, 2024.

to go and vote.

One male resident who lives a few blocks away from the church wanted to vote but said there was no sign displayed on the church of where to go. He started to walk back home down Jerome Avenue. We reached out to NYC Board of Elections for comment.

A spokesperson replied, saying, "We had no primary in the area. Hence - no polling sites open." The spokesperson added, "Also, it has not been a poll site since 2023, [a] decision of the church to remove themselves due to their restructuring. We do stay in contact with them and hope to get them back soon."

Another Bedford Park voter, "Ben," told *Norwood News* of his expectations from political leaders voted into office, "The election is about members of congress who are supposed to be the voice of the people. I want them to make NYC a more car-friendly environment and work on the road repairs, make traffic smoother, and work on the mental illness problem in NYC."

We waited for 45 minutes to speak to voters at JHS 80 on Mosholu Parkway on the border of Norwood and Bedford Park but there appeared to be very few people voting at this polling site.

Meanwhile, the polling site located at P.S. 94 Kings College in Norwood, located at 3530 Kings College Place, was relatively quiet, only receiving 42 in-person votes as of 3:30 p.m. on Election Day, according to the site's polling coordinator.

"As a citizen, you are supposed to vote," one Norwood resident who has lived in the area for over 20 years and declined to be named, told us. "We need our leaders to help us with things like the economy and all those kinds of things. We need that." She added that the voting process was simple and quick. "It was easy because I've voted before," she said.



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

VOTING BOOTHS AWAIT voters inside P.S. 94 Kings College polling site, 3530 Kings College Place, Norwood, on Primary Election Day, June 25, 2024. Photo by Ariel Pacheco



Letters To The Editor

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

Yiddish Language Corrections

In the *Norwood News* May 2-15, 2024 edition, an Editor's Note in response to a letter to the editor explained a Yiddish word, which had been wrongly used in that letter. The correct word is shandeh, not shanda, and while it does mean shame, the Yiddish spelling of 'shandeh' in the Editor's Note appeared in reverse. Since Yiddish is read from right to left, the word in the explanation would be read as 'ednash' (the Yiddish letter appearing at the far left is pronounced as 'sh' and the Yiddish letter appearing at the far right is 'eh' not 'ah'). The correct spelling would be שחנדה. Anyone with knowledge of the Yiddish language/alphabet would have picked up on that.

Judy Noy
Norwood resident

Editor's Note: Apologies for the misspelling. As I'm not a Yiddish speaker, I looked up the definition of the word "shanda" on the internet, on a site which appeared reliable, and simply copied and pasted the spelling and definition provided.

Open Letter to the Unity Democrats, NW Bronx Indivisible, and the Ruth Mullen Riverdale Huddle Groups

Six weeks ago, I asked NYC Councilman Eric Dinowitz in an open letter here in the *Norwood News* if a \$15K fine imposed on former Bronx Councilman Andy

King who was expelled from NYC Council was indeed paid. Dinowitz and his staff ignored my letter. Could you three groups get together in a summit meeting and find out if the fine was paid as well as whether the other Bronx disgraced politicians and union leaders paid their federal fines? They are Larry Seabrook, Norman Seabrook, and Efrain Gonzalez!

Richard Marias
Norwood

Editor's Note: Further to previous updates shared on this topic when Norwood News first reached out to the City Council for feedback and were referred to the City's law department, we have chased the City's law department several times over the course of several months dating back to at least October 2023 and have never received any feedback. We will continue to follow up and share any feedback we receive. Separately, as advised, we followed up with federal prosecutors at the Southern District of New York on Seabrook and Gonzalez and were referred to various general public docket records which will take some time to review. We will provide a further update once we have done so. On some of our other inquiries, the Southern District of New York prosecutors declined to comment. We will provide a complete summary of all feedback in due course.

Happy 60th Birthday to Bronx Public Transportation

July 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of federal government support for public transportation. The success of public transportation can be traced back to one of the late U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's greatest accomplishments which

continues benefiting many Americans today. On July 9, 1964, he signed the "Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964" into law. Subsequently, this has resulted in the investment over time of several hundred billion dollars into public transportation.

Millions of Americans, including many residing in The Bronx today, on a daily basis, utilize various public transportation alternatives. They include local and express bus, para transit, ferry, jitney, light rail, subway, and commuter rail services. All these systems use less fuel and move far more people than conventional single occupancy vehicles. Most of these systems are funded with your tax dollars thanks to President Johnson.

Depending upon where you live, consider the public transportation alternative. Try riding a local or express bus, commuter van, ferry, light rail, commuter rail or subway.

Liberty Lines Bronx Express and New York Bus previously provided express service between The Bronx and Manhattan. NYC transferred their franchise agreements to the MTA under a Master Lease and Operating Agreement in 2005. This included both equipment and bus facilities. The action resulted in the creation of MTA Bus. Fast forward to today. Fortunately, we have the MTA and its various operating agencies, including NYC Transit subway, bus and Staten Island Railway, Metro North & Long Island Rail Roads, MTA Bus, and Westchester Bee Line Bus.

Using MTA Metro or OMNY cards provides free transfers between the subway and bus. This has eliminated the old two fare zones making public transportation an even better bargain. Purchasing a monthly MetroNorth or MTA subway/

bus pass reduces the cost per ride and provides virtually unlimited trips.

In many cases, employers can offer transit checks which help subsidize a portion of the costs. Utilize this and reap the benefits. It supports a cleaner environment.

Many employers now allow employees to telecommute and work from home. Others use alternative work schedules which afford staff the ability to avoid rush hour gridlock. This saves travel time and can improve mileage per gallon. Join a car or van pool to share the costs of commuting.

The ability to travel from home to workplace, school, shopping, entertainment, medical, library etc. is a factor when moving to a new neighborhood. Economically successful communities are not 100% dependent on automobiles as the sole means of mobility. Seniors, students, low and middle-income people need these transportation alternatives. Investment in public transportation today contributes to economic growth, employment, and a stronger economy. Dollar for dollar, it is one of the best investments we can make.

Larry Penner,
Great Neck

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

Tenants and Elected Officials Gather To Protest Conditions at Tracey Towers

(continued from page 7)

Elected officials, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), District 11 City Council Member Eric Dinowitz, and Assemblymember John Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80), who showed up in support of the residents, called for immediate action to be taken.

Zaccaro Jr. said "Beginning today, I, along with my colleagues in government and the residents of Tracey Towers, are putting HPD and RY Management (the management company) on notice. You either start working with us, treating us with dignity and respect, because our voices will only get louder."

He added, "The residents of Tracey Towers are not asking for much. They want what every person who lives in an apartment building in New York City wants. This is not about amenities. This is about ensuring the basic needs of the tenants are met."

Rivera shared the same senti-

ment. "We need to make sure that we continue to put pressure on the management company," he said. "We're not asking for anything strange. We're asking for basic things that anybody would want to have in their home."

For his part, Dinowitz called on management to invest more resources in Tracey Towers while emphasizing the need to address the issues in an effective and timely manner. "Everything is a fight and that is wrong because you look at other parts of the city and they don't have to fight for these things," he said.

"There's massive, massive disinvestment in Tracey Towers. The residents need massive investments in the building to fix things like elevators, holes, mold, and smoke. They also need real investments in time and energy from management to make sure they're taking care of all the rat problems and immediately addressing holes in the ceilings."

Both Hill and the elected offi-

cial called on other Tracey Towers residents to join in the fight and to organize with the group going forward. Zaccaro Jr. concluded, "Today was a precursor to what we're going to start in organizing over the next couple of months." Meanwhile, Hill said, "We are fighting back now. We're letting the world know we are mad as hell about it and we're just not going to take it anymore."

Norwood News has contacted RY Management for comment. We will share any feedback we receive.

Photo by Ariel Pacheco

PRESIDENT OF THE Tracey Towers Tenant Association Jean Hill, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera, Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr., and City Council Member Eric Dinowitz attend a rally outside Tracey Towers in Bedford Park on June 15, 2024.



NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY ARIEL PACHECO



SUV Health & Safety Resource Fair

Stand Up to Violence, in collaboration with NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi is hosting a Health & Safety Resource Fair on Thursday, July 11, from noon to 3 p.m. at 1400 Pelham Parkway South in front of Building 1. For more information, call (718) 588-8977.

Dining Out NYC Deadline

Restaurant owners with outdoor dining must apply by Aug. 3 for a "Dining Out NYC" permit, the City's permanent outdoor dining program or else remove their outdoor dining set-up. To apply and to find more information, visit nyc.gov/Diningout.

Affordable Housing Fair

Bronx Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) is hosting an Affordable Housing Fair on Saturday, July 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at its premises at 1451 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, NY 10469. Admission is free. For more information, call (718) 881-1180.

Free Immigration Services

State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), in collaboration with Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, is hosting a free immigration services clinic on Friday, July 12, from 10 a.m. to noon, at 2432 Grand Concourse, Suite 506, Bronx, NY 10458. Appointments are required. For more information, call (718) 933-2034.

Grassroots Grocery Volunteers

Grassroots Grocery and Bronx Community Board 11 are hosting a community event on Saturday, Aug. 3, from 9 a.m. to noon, and are looking for volunteers to assist with packing, sorting, and loading vehicles with produce. The event takes place at 1750 E Gun Hill Road, Bronx, NY, 10469. For more information, visit <https://www.grassrootsgrocery.org/bxcb11>.

Gardening Tuesday at Bronx Park

Join the Bronx River Alliance for gardening on Tuesday, July 23, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Bronx Park entrance located at the intersection of Duncomb Avenue and Bronx

Boulevard, near 3400 Duncomb Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467. All necessary equipment will be provided. For more information, email jennifer.seda@bronxrivier.org.

VCJC Blood Drive

In partnership with the New York Blood Center (NYBC), Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC), 3880 Sedgwick Ave, Bronx, NY 10463, is hosting a blood drive on Sunday, July 28, 2024, from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. as blood is in short supply in the summer months. The New York Blood Center will be responsible for the collection of blood donations, while VCJC will provide the venue. For more information please call (718) 884-6105.



Don't Let Summer Heat Slow Down Your Exercise Routine!

By **CLAIRE GARON**

Summer means pools, beaches, and cookouts, and too often, boredom and TV. However, summer can be an amazing time to get fit, without the stressors of school and homework. Why not take the opportunity now to explore the options for gym membership and start a healthy summer routine. One option is Planet Fitness, which is offering teens aged 14-18 the use of the gym for free until Aug. 31.

Simply visit <https://www.planetfitness.com/summerpass>, and choose your Planet Fitness location. If you're under 18, you'll need your parents to sign you up. Other local gyms may also have special offers for youth, so make sure to do your homework and find the best option for you or your teen. A free gym membership is a wonderful opportunity, but "a goal without a plan is just a wish." Let's make a plan by using an approach I call Goal ABCs.

A is for "Activity." Will you do yoga, salsa, or weights? Pilates, treadmill, or a TikTok dance challenge? Let's break down your choices:

Strength training: Strength training refers to repeated exercise where we use resistance to challenge our muscles. This makes them grow larger, stronger, and more visible. Strength training includes exercises carried out with just our bodyweight (like push-ups and squats), exercises carried out with resistance bands, and exercises carried out with weights. Weights include ankle /

wrist weights, dumbbells, kettle bells, and barbells. They also include weight machines, like the leg press machine or the "lat" pull down machine.

Strength training has HUGE benefits. Want to lose fat in areas like your abdomen and increase rounded muscle in areas like thighs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, and back? Want to get better at any sport or dance? Want to heal or prevent knee and back pain? How about having more energy and less anxiety, lower blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol? Then strength training is for you!

I highly recommend that beginners start strength training at the gym with "bodyweight" exercises (no weights yet). Try this great video that introduces you to basic bodyweight moves: planking, squatting, arm rows, modified push-ups, and "good mornings" (hip hinge): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xEDsRU_JbM. Trust me, it'll be hard enough! Always do a warm-up before any form of strength training to prevent injury and get the best results.

Cardio refers to moving our body in repeated motions that cause an increase in our heart rate and breathing.

Cardio machines at the gym include the treadmill for walking or running, elliptical, stair climber, rowing machine, and bike. For best results, do an interval workout where you change the machine's speed and resistance over 10-30 minutes (a good range for beginners). Interval workouts burn more calories and improve your endurance more than moving at one pace. Follow a pre-set interval program on the cardio machine or a YouTube video designed for this purpose, like this one <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaaCFwO2XXQ>.

Cardio Videos/Apps allow you to exercise by following a video on your phone. Find a spot on a mat or studio room and press play! Try low-impact, high-intensity, interval training like this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA12FbNhCpA>, kickboxing,



and any kind of dance. Check out these dance workouts: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI37FJmOtrj1RofTaQRH6XH5BKEud10Jq>.

You can also Google "yoga or Pilates for beginners," and click the "video" heading. Just prop your device against a water bottle and use wireless headphones to hear the video when you're standing! Always do a warm-up before any form of cardio to prevent injury and get the best results.

B stands for Be Specific. Millions of Americans have a gym membership they barely use! You can do better! Take the time to make a specific, realistic plan. First, choose how many days you want to be at the gym during a normal week. Aim for two to five days per week. For strength training, three or four days is the sweet spot for growing and keeping muscle.

At the **start of each week**, think about the plans you already have: babysitting, internships, socializing, trips, religious obligations. Choose the two to five best dates and times for the gym that week. Remember, you can still go on days you have plans! You can go straight from an earlier event if you bring your gym gear, and for later events, go directly there by showering at the gym and bringing fresh clothes.

C stands for Calendar, Cues and Courage. These are actions that remind you of your plan. First, write your gym days on your phone or paper calendar. If you're following videos, make a YouTube playlist. You can also set an alarm on your phone as a reminder to hit the road! And finally, you need a "No-Skip Strategy." What are you going to do when you're not feeling the gym on your gym days? Occasional skips are fine, but frequent cancellations will hurt your progress. LeBron James or JLo likely have these days too. The difference is that they overcome these feelings. Use loving self-talk, not shaming or criticism. Try statements like, "You got this; only 40 minutes!" Naming the benefits of a single workout can also work wonders. For example, "This'll feel great!" or "This gives me energy."

If you prefer to do outdoor exercise, make sure you stay hydrated and exercise during the cooler parts of the day. Consistent exercise can change your life. Make a strong, realistic plan and get started, with or without a gym. Here's to a happy, healthy summer!

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

Out & About

Compiled by ARIEL PACHECO

EVENTS

The Office of State Sen. Jamaal T. Bailey (S.D. 36) is hosting its **Annual Summer BBQ** on Saturday, July 20, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 959 East 233rd Street, Bronx, NY, 10466. RSVP by Friday, July 12, by calling (718) 547-8854 or by emailing senatorjbailey@nysenate.gov.

The Bronx Historical Society presents **Reuter's Coach Works Virtual Talk**, where author John O'Leary will hold a

virtual talk and discussion on his work on the Reuter's Coach Works in The Bronx, a famed automobile shop opened in 1929 by Gus Reuter on Boston Post Road. The discussion will take place on Monday, July 15, at 7 p.m. To register for free, visit <https://Bronxhistoricalsociety.org/coach-works>.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The **7th Annual Latin American Foto Festival** takes place on Thursday, July 11, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Bronx Documentary Center Annex, 364 East 151st Street, The Bronx, NY 10455. The festival includes work from Bolivia, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil. For more information, contact (718) 993-3512.

MUSIC

The office of Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson presents **Bronx Summer Concert Series** on Sunday, July 14, from noon to 5 p.m. at Orchard Beach Section 5.

ARTS

The Bronx Library Center, located at 310 E Kingsbridge Rd., NY 10458, is hosting a **Paint and Sip** event where teens aged 13-18 can express themselves through acrylic painting & sip some juice in the Center's YA programming room on Tuesday, July 16, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244.

The Kingsbridge Historical Society will host **Neighborhood Panoramas: An Art and Photo Exhibit at Edgehill**

[Church], located at 2570 Independence Ave, Bronx, NY 10463, on Sunday, July 14, from noon to 3 p.m. This free exhibit will show early panoramic photos of Riverdale, Kingsbridge, Spuyten Duyvil, Marble Hill, and Inwood around the turn of the 20th century. For more information, email info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org.

MOVEMENT

For New Yorkers 60 years old and over, a **Seniors Fitness program** offers free twice weekly pickleball, tennis, yoga, and fitness walking classes across all five boroughs since April 2023. Participants of all levels are welcome to come out, have fun, and socialize. Visit <https://cityparksfoundation.org/> or call (212) 360-1399 for more information.

BMCA Honors Norwood News Editor



Photo courtesy of Bedford Mosholu Community Association

(L TO R) BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY Association committee members, Robin, Barbara Stronczer, Joy Syeeda LaFontaine (right) and Leonie (photographer, not pictured), present the 2024 Jack Kelly Memorial Award to Síle Moloney, *Norwood News* editor on Friday, July 28, 2024 at 400 East Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park.

By ARIEL PACHECO & SÍLE MOLONEY

The Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) committee announced during their last meeting before the summer recess that this year, it was honoring Síle Moloney, *Norwood News* editor, with the association's annual Jack Kelly Memorial Award.

Moloney joined *Norwood News* as an intern in 2019 while completing a master's degree in journalism at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism in Manhattan. She took over the reins of the nonprofit publication from former Editor-in-Chief David Cruz on the last day of March 2020, just weeks after the COVID-19 pandemic hit New York.

Presenting the award on the later date of Friday, July 28, BMCA President Barbara Stronczer, who was joined by committee members, Robin, Joy Syeeda LaFontaine and Leonia, for the occasion said, "Jack was one of the early founders of this association [which] started out as a local community patrol in the neighborhood and then, after more than a few

years, we could no longer be volunteers and we decided, rather than just disbanding, we would become a community association."

Stronczer added that BMCA has been in existence since the late 1970s. "The award is in recognition of outstanding service to our community," she said. The group has previously also honored other members of the community with the Annual Mary Vallati Memorial Award, including, in 2021, Sirio Guerino of Guerinos Against Graffiti* for his graffiti removal efforts and, in 2022, Marisa Canapi for her gardening work in the local neighborhood.

Moloney said she was humbled, honored and very happy to receive the award, which she accepted on behalf of all her *Norwood News* colleagues, the majority of whom are part-time freelancers, saying that it was a team effort. She thanked the BMCA committee and members for the honor and commended them on all the uplifting work they did for the local community.

This includes but is not limited to regular park clean-ups, facilitating civic engagement, encouraging residents to vote, and sharing vital information to keep residents safe, informed, and happy. BCMA affiliates include Perry Avenue Block Association, North Marion Avenue Block Association, Decatur Avenue Block Association, East 201st Street Block Association, Mosholu Parkway Block Association, North Central Avenue Block Association, and Botanical Square Block Association.

Moloney also said that having reported on and knowing the caliber of some of the previous award recipients, it was a particular honor to be recognized. She went on to praise a prior *Norwood News* intern who she said was from the local community, Bronx Community

District 7, while also commending the publication's current summer intern, Ashley Castillo, who is a wheelchair user, and who she said was doing a great job.

Of the prior local intern from a few years ago, Moloney added, "I won't say her name, but she was a great intern. I think of her today. She went through a lot of [personal] difficulties that summer and I just wish her well because she did a really good job and, you know, she embodies the resilient spirit of the community and of The Bronx as a whole. I'm very, very honored. Thank you so much."

Editor's Note: A further story will follow with more on the last BCMA meeting. Check page 14 for the next meeting date details.



Photo by Síle Moloney

STAFF MEMBERS OF NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx join the muralist who coordinated and completed a new interior wall mural which was unveiled inside the hospital on Friday, June 28, 2024.

NWBCCC Hosts first-ever Block Party



Photo by David Greene

ENJOYING A DAY of fun at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition's first block party on Saturday, June 15, 2024, are Kingsbridge residents (l-r): Tiana, 5; dad, Destiny; Zamiyah, 5, and Xavier, 10.



Photo by David Greene

STAFF MEMBERS WITH Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition offer free food to the public during their first-ever block party held outside their office on East 196th Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024.

By DAVID GREENE

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) had been hosting an annual barbecue in their tiny backyard for several years but this year, they expanded the idea to host a block party, featuring a host of events for the entire community.

The block was shut down outside the nonprofit's headquarters, located on East 196th Street between Creston Avenue and the Grand Concourse, while free food, a DJ, free roller-skating, and skate rentals were laid on for the community during the daylong event on Sat-

urday, June 15.

Roberta Todd, vice president of the NWBCCC board, said of the event, "We're out here on the street letting people in our neighborhood know what we're doing, and we've invited a lot of other organizations that provide services, because it's important that people know about these things like Legal Aid or about New York Cares."

In reference to neighborhood residents, Todd continued, "It's important that they know about all of the events and all the activities that are available to people in The Bronx." She added, "We

couldn't fit everyone in our little yard, so we wanted to open this up to more people."

Besides roller-skating, youngsters and adults were also offered free face-painting. Local groups participating included DUSA, Healthcare Education Project, the Urban Justice Center, Part of the Solution, The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit, New York State Nurses Association and Riverdale Senior Services.

Todd continued, "The whole point is to let people know that we all need to work together and that's why we have all these other people with tables, because we want people to work together."

"Jessie," a young woman who traveled from Forrest Avenue to attend the festivities, said, "It's a really great event for the neighborhood and everyone is enjoying it. They have some really great activities here."

Meanwhile, "Destiny," a father and resident of Kingsbridge who brought his three kids to the event, told *Norwood News*, "It's amazing! My kids came out to have a good time and they're definitely enjoying themselves, and we really appreciate it and we thank them so much."

Destiny, who had previously not known about NWBCCC, had his own face painted as Spiderman. When told he seemed to be enjoying the event more than his kids, he replied, "Yes, absolutely!"

NWBCCC was founded in 1974, and celebrates its 50th anniversary later this year. It works on such community issues as community development, housing justice and preserving public land. For more information on the NWBCCC, visit their website at: www.northwest-bronx.org.



Photo by David Greene

STAFF MEMBERS WITH Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition offer free food to the public during their first-ever block party held outside their office on East 196th Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024.



Photo by David Greene

OVER A DOZEN local organizations tabled at a block party to provide residents with information on various topics organized by Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition's on East 196th Street on Saturday, June 15, 2024.

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Public and Community Meetings

The 52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of the month sometimes virtually and sometimes in person. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next regular BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7) general board meeting will be held in September, after the summer hiatus, unless a special meeting is held before then. The monthly meetings are held at various locations in the district. Contact KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8 full board (hybrid) meeting will be held in September after the summer hiatus. Contact BX08@cb.nyc.gov to be added to the distribution list.

The BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (lobby floor). The group usually takes a summer hiatus and will meet again in September. For more details, please contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net.

Kingsbridge: Man Dies in Deegan Morning Crash

By DAVID GREENE

Police continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding a fatal, 4-vehicle crash reported on the Major Deegan Expressway. The NYPD said the crash was reported on the northbound Major Deegan Expressway at the West 230th Street Exit at 2:01 a.m. on Saturday, July 6.

Police said a 34-year-old man was driving a 2017 Jeep SUV, approaching West 230th Street, when he struck a 2021 GMC SUV that was being driven by a 47-year-old man. They said the GMC SUV overturned, and the driver of the Jeep SUV lost control, striking sand barrels before entering the grassy shoulder

of the highway. They said it crashed through a fence and struck two parked vehicles on Bailey Avenue.

EMS later pronounced the 34-year-old man dead at the scene, and police later identified the victim as Kevin Diaz, 34, of Claflin Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights. Officials say the 47-year-old driver remained at the scene and the investigation remains on-going.

The FDNY reported that two additional victims, besides the deceased man, were extricated from vehicles by firefighters. One victim refused medical attention and one victim was transported to St. Barnabas with minor injuries.



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Norwood Pride Debut

(continued from page 1)

ered at around 100 degrees on the day, delivering jubilant remarks to mark the historic occasion.

Gibson kicked off the formalities, saying, “You should know that I am proud to represent this great borough, but I’m also proud to be an ally of the LGBTQIA+ community,” the borough president said. “Earlier this month, we raised the Pride flag at Borough Hall. It will be up all month, for the whole month of June, to recognize the incredible accomplishments of so many of our LGBTQIA+ brothers, sisters, and siblings.”

At that flag-raising event which took place on June 3, the borough president presented awards to Javier Medrano, director of Latino & LGBTQ+ Affairs for New York State Attorney General Letitia James; Clarisa Alyateo, manager of Community & Government Affairs at DREAM Charter School; and the ally award was presented to Gary Axelbank, host of BronxTalk on BronxNet Television.

Back in Norwood, Gibson also referenced the Bronx Pride March, which had taken place the previous day, Saturday, June 22, and which began at 161st Street and the Grand Concourse, and continued through 149th Street, before heading east to 3rd Avenue and 149th Street. Officials from Gibson’s office said the march / parade was organized to increase the visibility and representation of the LGBTQIA+ community in Bronx County, while also celebrating diversity, and achievement throughout New York City.

It was followed by a Bronx Pride Festival along Westchester Avenue, off 3rd Avenue, hosted by Destination Tomorrow, the Bronx’s designated LGBTQ+ center, and featured the world-famous freestyle sensations, The Cover Girls, whose hits and fan favorites during the 1980s and 1990s included, “Show Me,” “Because of You,” “Promise Me.” Axelbank served as Grand Marshal for the parade this year.

Continuing her address in Norwood, Gibson continued, “Even with all the progress we have made, we still have a mighty long way to go. Our LGBT community still faces discrimination, unemployment, and housing instability. We proudly stand on the shoulders of those who have paved the way for us, and so we say, ‘thank you.’”

As of July 7, year-to-date hate crimes across The Bronx are up by 27.3% compared to the same time last year (14 v 11), while those for the 28-day period ending on July 7 across The Bronx are down by 100%, compared to the same timeframe



Matthew López-Jensen

ONE OF THE drag performers entertains kids at the inaugural Norwood Pride Festival held in the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood, The Bronx, on Sunday, June 23, 2024.

last year (0 v 1). Hate crime statistics can include crimes based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other reasons.

The latest available **citywide** May 2024 hate crime statistics, shared by the NYPD, showed that hate crimes based on sexual orientation were up 125% compared to the same timeframe last year. Meanwhile, the Innocence Project reported on June 27 that LGBTQ+ people are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal legal system. The full article can be read at <https://innocenceproject.org/lgbtq-people-are-vulnerable-to-wrongful-conviction/>.

Gibson ended her remarks with a call for celebration, before introducing Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), who broadly represents the northwest Bronx. “We stand on the shoulders of those that came before us,” he said. “Our older adult LGBTQ community, I want to give you a special round of applause [for] what you have seen over the years. You have seen struggle, but you have seen immense progress for our LGBTQIA+ community, and that is thanks to all of you standing up, proud and fighting for your rights, sometimes your right to simply exist as who you are, to love who you love, to be who you are.”

Dinowitz went on to describe his time as a public-school teacher, before he became a council member, and how it was already difficult being a high schooler, but even more difficult, a queer high schooler. “A few months back, I stood with the LGBTQIA+ caucus in the New York City Council here in The Bronx, where they held a round table for the Marsha and Sylvia plan to hear directly from the affected communities of what, how you would like to see our city,” Dinowitz said.

A veteran of the 1969 Stonewall Inn uprising, *Sylvia Rivera* was a tireless advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community, as was Marsha P. Johnson. Dinowitz added, “How should we do things differently? What programs should be funded? I am proud to be in a city council that commits hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars. I am a proud spon-

sor of this event. I am proud to support the LGBTQIA+ community day in and day out as your city council member.”

For his part, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 31), who also represents the northwest Bronx, among other areas of the borough, highlighted the momentous occasion of the inaugural Norwood Pride Festival. “I know this is the first one,” he said. “I know it will not be the last. It is an opportunity for us to celebrate our community, our neighbors, to be able to say to everybody, you are loved, you are respected, you are embraced. You are who you are; we love who you are.” Rivera expressed his pride in passing legislation for marriage equality in 2011 in New York State, referencing a couple from Florida whose marriage he officiated.

“So they [the couple] came up to New York and they said, ‘Would you do us the honor of marrying us right in front of [the] Stonewall [Inn]? And we did! They got married in front of Stonewall. I signed that marriage certificate, and they have that official wedding. They went back and they have a beautiful family, and that’s the type of thing that we are celebrating today, the fact that you are who you are. We love you. We appreciate you. We respect you. And I will continue to be with you.’”

To mark the occasion, the Williamsbridge Oval was decorated with an abundance of colorful balloons, flags and a “Pride Hall of Fame” display curated by the Bronx Historical Society showing some of the historical pioneers and activists who fought for LGBTQIA+ rights down through the years. These included Sylvia Rivera, James Baldwin, Mabel Hampton, Jesús Lebrón, Charles Rice-Gonzalez, Arthur Avilés, Urayoan Noel, Dominique Jackson, and Cecilia Gentili.

The U.S. Social Security Administration also celebrated Pride Month. “We are proud to highlight the resources available on our LGBTQ+ webpage, which provides information on Social Security’s programs and services tailored to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people and their families” department of

officials said. “This includes information about benefits for same-sex couples and self-attestation of gender identity in Social Security records. These resources are essential for ensuring the LGBTQ+ community can access the benefits and services they deserve.”

Various organizations, including Destination Tomorrow, SOMOS LOUD, VNS Health and more tabled at the event under tents which were dotted across the park, while in another tent at a nearby court, attendees could pick up free refreshments and cupcakes after receiving a ticket from the Jerome Gun Hill BID tent.

Attendees were able to sign up for information from these organizations, as well as collect pamphlets regarding healthcare (i.e. STI testing, etc) and health insurance, as well as safety and support.

Drag queens took to the stage during the event, interacted with a group of kids, there were musical performances, a DJ, and lots of fun games and activities. Upbeat music could be heard throughout the day over several speakers, and the 52nd Precinct’s LGBTQ+ Outreach Unit also had a tent set up, along with a police vehicle decked out in rainbow lettering, decals, and lights.

Matthew López-Jensen and his husband, Jesús, were in attendance and were delighted with the event’s success. “We wanted to send a quick note of thanks [...] for the first Norwood Pride [Festival],” they later wrote in part. Since moving to Norwood seven years ago, we’ve always imagined the Oval as a space for a big Bronx Pride event. It is such the perfect spot, one of the few locations in The Bronx with all the necessary facilities, a feeling of safety, good train access and bus lines.”

They added, “The punishing heat certainly made it a challenge and I’m sure cut back on attendance. Next year will be bigger and better. It was profound and uplifting on a number of levels.”

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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