



# NORWOOD NEWS

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## STOLEN VAN SUSPECT PLEADS INNOCENCE



Photo by David Greene

**POLICE OFFICERS FROM** the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct surround an allegedly stolen van that police said crashed during a police pursuit in front of 2848 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor on Saturday, Aug. 17, 2024.

**By DAVID GREENE**

A police pursuit of the driver of a stolen van through the streets of Fordham Manor ended in an apparent foot chase and an eventual arrest. The male driver now faces a slew of charges as he maintains his innocence.

According to the NYPD, the incident unfolded at 4.20 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17, at the corner of Bainbridge Avenue and East 194th Street.

An NYPD spokesperson told *Norwood News*, "A 33-year-old male observed his vehicle (2009 Ford E-350) parked at the loca-

tion with a male suspect inside of it. The victim approached the vehicle and tried to gain control of it when the suspect shoved him away and fled in the vehicle."

The spokesperson said that as police attempted to get the driver to pull the vehicle over,

he fled the scene, hitting several vehicles as he did so. "The vehicle crashed at Bainbridge Avenue and East 198 Street and the suspect fled on foot but was taken into custody shortly after," police said.

Police said they later ar-

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# Bedford Park Residents Enjoy Open Streets

**STORY & PHOTOS BY MIRIAM QUIÑONES**

Once again, New York City's Open Streets initiative transformed some of the city's designated streets into public spaces on Saturday Aug. 24, for the enjoyment of residents. This year, along the Grand Concourse near Bedford Park Boulevard in Bedford Park, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., some residents simply walked, others biked, and some just sat, had a picnic, and enjoyed some fun activities.

A few residents who spoke to *Norwood News* about the Open Streets program said they were happy with it but wished it had been on a Sunday, when there was less traffic in the area, generally. Jennifer Ye felt the Open Streets initiative should be held more often, like twice a month. Meanwhile, Grandmother Iris Lugo said it was good for her because she lives right on the block.



**OFFICERS DRIVE ALONG** the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park to make sure everything is safe for pedestrians during the Open Streets initiative on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024.



**RESIDENTS OF ALL** ages ride their bikes along the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, during the Open Streets initiative.



**GRANDMOTHER IRIS LUGO** and her grandson, Benny Fernandez, have a relaxing time drawing with some chalk along the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, during the Open Streets initiative.



**WHILE SOME RIDE** bikes, others jog along the Grand Concourse in Bedford Park on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, during the Open Streets initiative.



# Decatur Ave Tenants Launch Association

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & ARIEL PACHECO**

Tenants at 3322 Decatur Avenue in Norwood gathered in the first-floor reception area of their building on June 19 to discuss forming a tenants' association and possible avenues to tackle what they said were "poor conditions" in the 122-unit building.

Madeline Olmeda, who led the meeting and has lived in the building for 13 years, said, "The main purpose of this meeting is to establish the tenants' association because if everybody here is not involved, it's not going to happen."

Tenants alleged they'd witnessed prostitution and drug use by people experiencing homelessness inside the building and said Wavecrest, the building's management team, were slow to fix and repair reported issues. "We're not asking for anything unreasonable and we're not asking for anything we don't deserve," Olmeda said.

She continued "We know that homelessness is a big issue in this city and everywhere else, so if there is a way we can help these individuals, then we are going to try to help these individuals. They just can't live on our roof. They just can't live in our stairways. They just can't urinate and defecate in our hallways. It just can't happen anymore."

Norwood News was shown where one of the walls in a stairway had urine stains, and a resident also said urine had streamed down the steps of the stairway. We were also shown inside the apartment of one female resident which had damp moldy conditions in the bathroom.

A police officer from the local 52nd precinct who was present at the meeting said of the prostitution and drug use issues, "The biggest thing I can say that you should talk to management about is getting the roof alarm fixed. If that roof alarm goes off, people get scared. They don't want to hang out there. That's a big safety thing I would talk to management about, because that door should be locked."

Tenants also said people experiencing homelessness had been using unoccupied apartments to partake in illegal activities like prostitution and drug use. The officer advised tenants to report any illegal or suspicious activity by calling 911.

"If they are in apartments that are empty, that means they are trespassing," the officer said of the visitors and their alleged illegal activities. "They're not supposed to be there."



Photo by Sile Moloney

**MADLINE OLMEDA, NOW-PRESIDENT**, of a newly formed tenants' association based at 3322 Decatur Avenue in Norwood, addresses tenants during a meeting held in the building's reception area on June 19, 2024.



Photo by Sile Moloney

**ANNETTE MORALES, NOW-OUTREACH** coordinator of a newly formed tenants' association based at 3322 Decatur Avenue in Norwood, addresses tenants during a meeting held in the building's reception area on June 19, 2024.

Meanwhile, a representative from public defenders The Legal Aid Society who was present at the meeting explained to tenants the different approaches they could take to handle issues which remained unsolved by the management team. Some included filing complaints with state agencies like the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR).

"You can file complaints about all these issues together in one document and all of you can sign it," the female representative said. "They will send inspectors out, look at the building, and if they find the conditions that you complained about on the day that they are here, they will issue an order that freezes your rent back one rent increase, and then it stays there until the landlord makes those repairs. So, it's putting financial pressure on the landlord," the representative added.

She continued, "Sometimes, landlords, when they see those complaints, they rush to fix things and since that's your goal, that's also a win." The Legal Aid Society representative added, "One thing I want to underscore is that you have a right to organize as tenants. You have a right to use the common spaces as long as you are not blocking the safety exits. You have a right to hold your landlord accountable for these kinds of problems that you're having."

At the time of the June meeting, the tenants had yet to elect a president for the new tenants' association, though another meeting was held in August, when Olmeda was elected president, Jose Rivera as vice president, Annette Morales as outreach coordinator, and Naomi Nunez as secretary.

One tenant expressed frustration with the building's new super, who some tenants said has been difficult to con-

tact. "The super has been here at least two months before any of us even knew he existed," the tenant said.

One tenant, who asked to remain anonymous, made multiple allegations about the living conditions in the building. He said not all cameras captured all activity inside the building since he said they do not point in all directions. The tenant also alleged he was discriminated against for his sexuality by a prior super of the building. He said he was also subjected to slurs by the same super.

"I've been the subject of a big joke living here," the tenant said. "The discrimination has been tolerated here for a lot of years since I've lived here." While a new super has recently been appointed, the tenant also alleges that a previous super also used a section of the building's basement, meant for garbage disposal, as a bike and motorcycle repair business.

Norwood News was shown an area which was filled with dozens of bikes while nearby, large trash items were blocking the entrance to the garage because there was apparently no space for them in the designated trash area. The tenant also said this meant tenants had to use another area of the building to dispose of garbage, which led to roaches and mice in the building.

When contacted for comment on the various allegations made by tenants, Wavecrest Management, the building's management company, shared the following statement with Norwood News:

"At Wavecrest Management, our number one priority is to provide safe, clean homes for all our residents. We're working closely with the NYPD to increase security measures at the site. All the cameras in the building are functioning properly and moving forward, the NYPD will have remote access to the footage to address trespassing."

The statement continued, "When provided with timely notification and access to apartments, we work to resolve issues immediately, most within 48 hours. Consistent collaboration with residents is essential and we strive to build positive, open communication channels. We're also working directly with the tenant association president to improve the site."

It concluded, "We take discrimination allegations very seriously and do not tolerate harassment of any kind. All on-site staff have completed their sexual harassment training, as all Wavecrest employees are required to do every year."

# INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By **DAVID GREENE**



After federal prosecutors recently announced that Nicole Torres, an NYC Board of Elections employee and a Bronx district leader in Assembly District 81, which broadly covers the northwest Bronx, was arrested for allegedly illegally demanding payments from Bronx residents to herself and to a local Bronx organization in exchange for selecting those individuals as poll workers, and for allegedly falsifying documents to fraudulently obtain poll worker paychecks, this week, we asked readers if they still had faith in the NYC Board of Elections ahead of November's presidential and other general elections.



"I do have faith in the NYC Board of Elections. I've been a poll worker for over 25 years, so the fact that someone is caught doing something underhanded doesn't mess up what's going on for the rest of the people that are working there. It doesn't make sense that someone would be trying to sell anything within the election process because it's for the people. Regardless, if you're Democrat or Republican, you shouldn't be selling any jobs. You shouldn't be getting people jobs, especially if it's not your district. As a Democratic poll worker, I'm going to be working this election, and I am strongly faithful it's going to be a good vote."

**R.L. Neal, (ret. veteran)**  
Pelham Parkway  
Photo by David Greene



"I do not have confidence in the NYC Board of Elections and the reason I do not is because they can't be trusted; anything can happen. These people are scheming and scamming, it's clear. You're paying somebody out of pocket to get a job; you don't even know what's going on. If you can't trust them as far as an election, can you imagine what else they are doing? There are so many things going on in the world that haven't discouraged me; this won't. This just makes me want to vote for the right people. Nobody can be sure, but I'm hopeful my vote will be counted."

**Mali Grey,**  
Wakefield  
Photo by David Greene



"No, I don't have the same faith with them, especially with the information I just heard. I've been out of school for five years now, so me hearing this, it's weird. I don't like how the system is working now, and I just hope that the government gets better because there's a lot of corrupt things going on and I hope we can do better as a community to help improve things for our children and not steer them in the wrong direction. I feel like this is the most important election of all time, because there's a lot of things going on and a lot of things must change, and if we don't make our voices heard, nothing will change."

**Jordan Haynie,**  
Bedford Park  
Photo by David Greene



"I wouldn't say I have confidence, but I do feel like we will select the right candidates for the job. Honestly, there's a lot of ins and outs and a lot of things that should come to light, but don't. I'm not too confident that my vote will be counted. I can only say that I have confidence in the fact that we will select proper candidates. I'm not afraid at all of a situation like January 6th happening again, not at all."

**Jonathan White,**  
Bedford Park  
Photo by David Greene



"No, I do not have trust in the NYC Board of Elections. I did not have trust in them before you explained this to me. It makes sense that someone would try and profit off of the position and try and control the election. I think those of us voting Republican in New York are probably not getting treated fairly, and I do not trust the NYC Board of Elections. Of course I'm going to vote. I hope my vote is counted; I'm going to cast my vote. But I hope, you know..."

**Ian Blackstone,**  
Bedford Park visiting Jerome Park  
Photo by David Greene

*Editor's Note: Torres is deemed innocent of the referenced charges unless and until convicted in a court of law. Norwood News reached out to NYC Board of Elections for comment on the charges brought against Torres. We also contacted the Bronx Republican Party for comment since it has been reported that Torres is a Republican. We did not receive a response as of press date from either entity.*

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# Coalition of Bronx Democratic Leaders Propose Improvements to Election Process

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A coalition of Bronx Democrats and Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club (BFRDC) members submitted recommendations to the New York City Board of Elections (BOE) in July, which they said are aimed at enhancing future electoral processes. The coalition includes Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81), Council Member Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11), District Leader Ben Jackson (A.D. 81), State Committee Members Michael Heller and Johanna Edmondson (A.D. 81), Emily Hausman, BFRDC member, and BFRDC President Virginia Krompinger.

The coalition members said the proposals came in the wake of the June primary election in The Bronx, adding that the leaders, representing the BFRDC and broader community interests, acknowledged the BOE's efforts in managing what they described as "a largely

successful election," while identifying areas for improvement.

Eric Dinowitz said of the proposed reforms, "We must constantly reassess the success of our elections and continue to work tirelessly to improve voter engagement and understanding. While extremists across the country and here in The Bronx seek to cast doubt upon our democratic system, our recommendations will fortify our electoral system and ensure that voters are equipped with the tools they need to remain engaged in our democratic process."

*Norwood News* asked the councilman if he could be more specific about which extremists in The Bronx he was referencing, since there has been some acrimony between the BFRDC and The Bronx's Unity Democratic Club. We also asked him if his constituents had raised concerns with his office about any confusion they may have experienced at the polls during the last primaries, and if so, if he could share with us what, if any, those concerns were. We did not receive an immediate response.

Meanwhile, the coalition members said their key recommendations include:

1. Reorganizing ballot layouts to clearly indicate voting and winning mechanisms for each race, particularly for district leader and State committee positions.
2. Updating the BOE unofficial results website to better reflect how winners are determined, addressing voter confusion experienced in the recent election.
3. Implementing a system to mail sample ballots with detailed voting instructions to all registered voters prior to elections.
4. Sending additional notifications to voters affected by poll site changes to ensure aware-



Photo courtesy of the Office of Jeffrey Dinowitz  
**ASSEMBLYMAN JEFFREY DINOWITZ** (A.D. 81) and his son, Councilman Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) attend a rally in Times Square to call for the release of Jewish hostages by Hamas following the Oct 7, 2023 terrorist attacks by Hamas on various Israelis in southern Israel.

ness of correct voting locations.

*Norwood News* had reported on confusion experienced by some voters during the latest June primary. We contacted NYC Board of Elections at the time explaining that two voters at P.S. 207 in Kingsbridge, located at 3030 Godwin Terrace, 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.

We were informed by Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) that some of their members said the same thing. We asked the BOE if it was not made clear to voters that there were local elections for Democratic district leaders. We did not receive an immediate response.

In addition, some voters in Congressional District 16 said they too experienced some confusion amid the June primary.

As reported, we previously contacted the Bronx Democratic Party for more information on the various Democratic Party positions and what exactly they entailed. We did not receive an immediate response, but the Party's website does now appear to provide this information. We also reported that not all filled party positions appeared to be listed on the Bronx Democratic Party's website and asked the Party about this. We were informed that it would duly be updated.

We also asked the Party in the interests of democracy why some Bronx Democratic Party members hold dual roles within the Party. We did not receive an immediate response.

Meanwhile, Jeffrey Dinowitz said of the coalition's latest electoral reform proposals, "We've taken many steps in recent years to improve the electoral process in New York and to try to increase turnout. We have more work to

do." He added, "If the suggestions that we have made are enacted, they will make it simpler to understand the ballot, give more information to people about what they're voting on, make sure people know where they can go to vote, and ensure that they can see accurate results. We need to make these changes as quickly as possible."

For her part, Krompinger said as the coalition strived for a more inclusive party structure and opportunities for leadership across genders, challenges related to ballot clarity were to be expected. "The Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club has a storied history of promoting progressive electoral reforms. As president of the largest Democratic Club in The Bronx, I'm confident the Board of Elections will take our recommendations into account for future elections."

Jackson also shared his comments, saying voting and viewing election results should always be easy and straightforward, not confusing and frustrating. "These proposed reforms will go a long way to fixing the issues we heard about from voters across the North Bronx during our recent primary elections," he said.

Heller said that when a voter looks at a ballot with many names and many offices in a seemingly random order, a lot of confusion may take place. "Based on our experience, future ballots should contain all necessary information for voters to make informed decisions about how their votes are tabulated."

Meanwhile, Hausman said, "As an educator and community leader, I've seen firsthand how confusing ballot design and lack of information can discourage civic participation. Clear, informative ballots and sample ballots are crucial for nurturing an engaged citizenry." She added, "Just as we strive to make learning accessible for our youngest students, we must ensure our democratic process is easily understood by all voters, regardless of their background or experience with politics."

Finally, Edmondson said that in her work "empowering women, both in fitness and politics," she has learned that clarity and accessibility are key to participation. "Just as we design our gym to be welcoming and intuitive for women of all fitness levels, our ballots should be clear, accessible and informative for voters of all backgrounds," she said. "Improving ballot design and access isn't just about reducing confusion, it's about fostering an inclusive democracy where every voice, especially those traditionally underrepresented, can be heard and counted."

The coalition members said the signed proposal emphasizes the importance of clear communication and voter education in maintaining fair and transparent elections.



**PART 1 OF** A letter by a Bronx Democratic Coalition of election reform recommendations sent to the NYC Board of Elections following the June 2024 Primaries. Source: Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club



# Yankees & STEM Institute Honor Students at Yankee Stadium

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Students from the STEM Educational Institute were recognized on the field at Yankee Stadium before the Yankees vs. Blue Jays game on Friday, Aug. 2, as part of the New York Yankees STEM initiative. The initiative provides training by the STEM Educational Institute to underrepresented high school students across the city to help improve their technological and financial literacy skills.

During the Aug. 2 game, the Institute also hosted a fundraising event, featuring autographed items, unique memorabilia, and 2025 Yankee season tickets. As part of the STEM initiative, students participate in a one-year program that begins each summer.

“Unfortunately, in areas where students are in underrepresented populations or under-resourced, they are not getting the technological skills they need,” said Nikisha Alcindor, president and founder of the STEM Educational Institute. “So that’s where we come in, and that’s our mission.”

Alcindor said when students complete the program, they receive a stipend, college scholarship, and access to an alumni learning platform. “It’s our commitment to them to see them finish high school, go through college, finish college, and then get a career in STEM,” Alcindor continued.

During the summer, representatives from the Institute said students receive hands-on training where they learn to use Python, a computer programming language, and how to utilize it. Students also learn financial literacy, including the basics of budgeting and investing as



Photo courtesy of the NY Yankees

**STEM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE** students are honored on the field before the Yankees vs. Blue Jays game at Yankee Stadium on Friday, Aug 2, 2024.

they prepare for college. Additionally, they receive guidance on how to deal with stress efficiently to help maintain good mental health.

Once the summer portion of the program concludes, students attend the Institute one Saturday each month to continue their learning. Alcindor said this year, the STEM Educational Institute reached a milestone of 100 students served, with 27 students currently in college and majoring in STEM skills.

She added, “We have 100 percent of our high school students graduate high school where only 80% of students in New York are graduating from high school.”

The fundraising event held at the stadium also honored Dr. Ushma Neill, vice president of scientific education and training at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK). MSK has provided learning opportunities for students with the STEM Educational Institute in the past, and Neill oversees the scientific academic curriculum and training for all scientists and laboratories for MSK.

“You can’t just jump straight to highly trained physicians and scientists,” said Neill. “You have to have a pipeline and that’s where STEM Educational Institute comes into play. They grab these bright talents, and they nurture them over time and make sure they are put on a path that might lead to us someday, if we’re lucky enough to recruit them.”

Christopher Grullon, who completed the program two years ago and is now a teaching assistant for engineering courses at Columbia University, said it was an

amazing experience. “[It] helped me get out of my comfort zone,” he said. “In the program, it would be an experience of waking up to people ready to see you and understand who you are and what you’re trying to do.”

Grullon continued, “The experience helped me get more comfortable around people and with people, to be more open with energy and with that energy. I am able to keep on connecting with others. The program helped me to find other summer opportunities that would help me in my career because I want to pursue civil engineering.”

Meanwhile, Brian Smith, Yankees senior vice president of corporate /community relations, said of the initiative, “The New York Yankees are proud to contribute to the development of the next generation of STEM leaders and professionals in partnership with the STEM Educational Institute.”

He continued, “By instilling participants with tangible skills to reach their dreams for the future, the New York Yankees STEM Scholars program empowers young people from underserved populations with critical compo-

nents for workplace success and long-term personal stability.”

Smith concluded, “We are so excited to continue this program for a third consecutive year and look forward to cultivating young STEM talent who can be a beacon for their community.”



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

**STEM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE** alum, Christopher Grullon, speaks at a fundraising event before the Yankees vs. Blue Jays game at Yankee Stadium on Friday, Aug 2, 2024.



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

**THE STEM EDUCATIONAL** Institute logo is displayed during the Yankees vs. Blue Jays game at Yankee Stadium on Friday, Aug 2, 2024.



# NEWS BRIEFS

By SÍLE MOLONEY

## NYPD Officer Arrested under Excessive Force Bill

Bronx DA Darcel Clarke announced on Aug. 8 that NYPD Officer Omar Habib is the first officer to be indicted under New York City Statute 10-181, "Unlawful Methods of Restraint," following a chokehold incident in the Eastchester section of The Bronx in July 2023 which left one man unconscious.

Passed in 2020, after the killing of George Floyd by former Police Officer Derek Chauvin in Minnesota, the New York City statute was also inspired by the tragic death of Eric Garner on Staten Island in 2014, during a police encounter. The New York Times reported that charges were dropped against the police officer involved in Garner's death, Daniel Pantaleo. Since then, the statute makes it a misdemeanor for police to use chokeholds or compress a person's windpipe, carotid arteries, or diaphragm during an arrest.

Meanwhile, AP reported that in November 2023, Chauvin was stabbed in prison 22 times by a former gang leader who has since been charged with attempted murder. The same month, a judge rejected Chauvin's initial appeal to overturn his conviction for Floyd's death. Chauvin is further appealing on the basis of claims of new evidence. Habib is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

## NYC Parks Launches Pizza-Box Trash Cans to Help Manage Trash & Discourage Rats

Pizza boxes, difficult to fit in typical trash cans, can now be disposed in specially designed trash cans in five parks citywide. NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue announced the installation of the new trash receptacles, custom-designed for the disposal of pizza boxes, on Aug. 30. Through the new initiative, visitors at parks throughout the city can dispose of their empty pizza boxes in these dedicated containers, rather than forcing the rectangular boxes into circular bins.

A total of six receptacles were installed in five parks throughout the city, in time for Labor Day weekend. In The Bronx, the new trash can is located in Loreto Playground and if successful, it is hoped the plan will be expanded to more areas.

By keeping pizza boxes separate from other trash, representatives from NYC Parks said they hope to reduce trash can overflow and keep city parks cleaner, as bulky pizza boxes sometimes cause blockages inside traditional trash cans. They said ensuring that empty pizza boxes and food waste are disposed of separately will also reduce the food sources available to rats, furthering

New York City's ongoing rat-mitigation efforts.



Photo courtesy of NYC Parks

## NEW PIZZA-BOX TRASH Cans

## NYC DOT Enhances Pedestrian Safety at Start of School Year

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez and Deputy Mayor of Operations Meera Joshi announced Sept. 3 that the agency has improved visibility for pedestrians at hundreds of locations, many near schools, using a tool known as "daylighting" to mark the start of the school year. They said daylighting enhances safety by removing visibility-blocking obstructions, such as parked vehicles, near intersections. They said the technique helps drivers more easily see pedestrians and other road users.



Photo courtesy of The Angellyh Yambo Foundation

## ANGELLYH MARIEH YAMBO

## Polymer80 Ghost Gun Manufacturer Shuts Down

Everytown gun violence awareness advocates announced on Aug. 30 that Polymer80, the largest producer of ghost gun kits and parts in the country, has shut down. The group said the announcement follows multiple lawsuits brought by Everytown Law, adding that Polymer80's non-serialized, untraceable ghost guns, bought and built without background checks, have been fueling the gun violence crisis for years.

The family of the late, 16-year-old, Bronx teen, Angellyh Marieh Yambo, had also filed a civil lawsuit on March 27 against Polymer80, Inc., which

equipped Angellyh's 17-year-old shooter and named defendant, Jeremiah Ryan, with an untraceable firearm.

## Mpxx Declared Global Emergency

The City's health department has highlighted that the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared mpxx a public health emergency of international concern, due to a large outbreak of mpxx in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with some spread to other countries. Health officials said the latest outbreak involves a different variant of mpxx (clade I) than the one that has been circulating in New York City, and elsewhere in the U.S. (clade II). They said clade I mpxx appears to be more infectious and causes more serious disease than clade II, and the JYNNEOS vaccine protects against clade I mpxx and is expected to also protect against clade II mpxx. According to updates on the City's health department website on Sept. 2, there have been no cases of clade I mpxx in the U.S.

City health officials added that since Jan. 1, 307 people in New York City have tested positive for mpxx. They said there were 26 cases from July 7 to Aug. 3 (latest available data).

## Bronx Defenders & Union Strike Deal

The Bronx Defenders (BxD), public defenders, and the union representing a majority of BxD staff, the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys-UAW Local 2325,

recently announced that they have finalized a collective bargaining agreement, averting a strike. They said the parties had recently been negotiating a second collective bargaining agreement since the union was voluntarily recognized by BxD in 2020.

They said among other deals, the new 2-year contract raises wages for all unionized roles on average by at least 8%, institutes a fair and highly flexible hybrid work policy, and other health and leave benefits. Wesley Caines, BxD interim executive director, said in part, "I want to thank the management team and the union's collective bargaining committees for their tireless and good-faith work on this agreement, and for never forgetting that this process was about how we can best serve the people of the Bronx while compensating staff fairly for that work."

## Court Rules Taxis Must be Wheelchair Accessible

On Aug. 30, a federal judge in the Southern District of New York denied the City's motion to free itself from a court-ordered obligation to make at least 50% of its iconic yellow taxi fleet accessible to people who use wheelchairs. The court ordered the enforcement of the obligation to make at least half of its taxi fleet accessible. To do so, the court ordered that 100% of all new vehicles affiliated with an unrestricted medallion be accessible vehicles until the 50% requirement is met.

# AG Warns of AI Video Investment Scams

By SÍLE MOLONEY

New York Attorney General (AG) Letitia James issued an investor alert on Aug. 29, warning New Yorkers about scams luring potential investors with fake videos created with artificial intelligence (AI) that apparently show celebrities or wealthy business leaders touting investment schemes, which are actually fraudulent. James said the videos, known as deepfakes, often appear in social media feeds, digital ads, and messaging apps and are expected to fuel billions of dollars in fraud every year.

She urges New Yorkers to heed tips to protect themselves from such fraud and to look out for red flags, including promises of guaranteed returns on investments, demands to invest immediately or warnings of missing out on an opportunity, apparent requests to invest by celebrities or other famous people, demands to send cryptocurrency to a non-bit licensed platform or a private wallet, and requests to move public conversations on social media to encrypted, private messaging platforms.

James is also encouraging New Yorkers to search the internet for reviews on salespeople and to verify any physical address provided by a salesperson. New Yorkers can check investment

professional registration at <https://brokercheck.finra.org/>.

She also advised residents to be wary of livestreams or other video/audio messages trying to persuade residents to make any investments, even if they appear to be livestreams, as they could be deepfakes. The AG said to carry out a reverse search of the footage used, and check reliable sources for previous interviews of the speaker, adding that fraudsters often utilize footage from an existing, real public video or audio.

James urged residents not to provide any personal information, financial information, or log-in credentials, etc., to any individual met online only and that if a solicitation apparently comes from a known contact, to verify that it is an actual known contact by reviewing that contact's profile and contacting them through alternate means, such as a phone call for validation.

To prevent fraudsters from impersonating any contacts, James urged residents to change their profile settings to keep their friends list, photos, videos, posts, and even comments private and not to click on any links in emails or direct messages unless the identity of the

(continued on page 11)



# CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY, DAVID GREENE& MIRIAM QUIÑONES



## University Heights: Man Sought for Nonfatal Shooting

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is sought for questioning in connection with a nonfatal shooting that occurred in University Heights. Police said that on Saturday, Aug. 24, at around 4.30 p.m., a 25-year-old male victim was standing in front of 1917 Andrews Avenue when an unidentified person fired multiple shots, striking the victim throughout the body.

They said the suspect fled the location on foot, heading southbound on Andrews Avenue and that EMS responded and transported the victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Lincoln in stable condition. Police said the suspect is described as male, has a slim build, is around 5 feet, 10 inches tall, has dreadlocks, glasses, and partial facial hair. They said he was last seen wearing a black, Nike, hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, and light-colored sneakers.

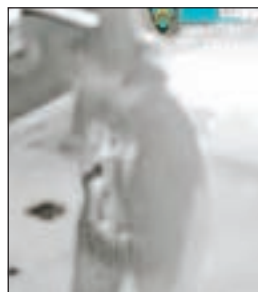
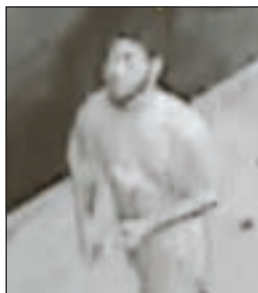
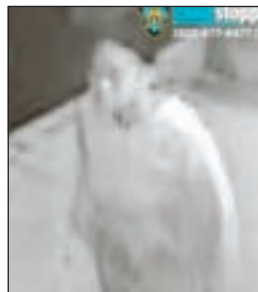
## Norwood: Group Sought for Robbery of Woman, 69

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos to the right who they say are sought in connection with a robbery of a 69-year-old woman in Norwood. Police said that on Thursday, July 18, at around 4.30 p.m., in the vicinity of Decatur Avenue and East 211th Street, three unidentified people approached a 69-year-old woman from behind.

They said Individual #1 pushed her to the

ground, and stole \$9 and her cell phone, and that the victim went to St. Barnabas Hospital by private means, where she was treated for minor injuries. They said the group fled northbound on Decatur Avenue to parts unknown. Police said Individual #1 is described as male, has a dark complexion, a slim build, and short, dark hair.

They said he was last seen wearing a light-colored shirt and dark-colored pants. They said Individual #2 is described as female, has a dark complexion, a medium build, has dark-colored hair, and was last seen wearing a black shirt and dark pants. Police said Individual #3 is described as female, has a dark complexion, and was last seen wearing a light-colored sweater and dark-colored pants.



## Fordham Manor: Group Sought for Gang Assault of Man, 57

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the people seen in the accompanying photos to the right who they say are sought in con-

Patrol Borough: Bronx Precinct: 052

CompStat Book Week of 08/26/24 - 09/01/24

	28 Day			Year to Date		
% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder 00.0 %	0	4	-100.0 %	7	8	-12.5 %
Rape 00.0 %	0	5	-100.0 %	27	25	8.0 %
Robbery 54.5 %	52	35	48.6 %	360	309	16.5 %
Felony Assault 44.4 %	81	52	55.8 %	550	457	20.4 %
Burglary 00.0 %	19	13	46.2 %	132	155	-14.8 %
Grand Larceny 37.5 %	74	60	23.3 %	547	487	12.3 %
Grand Larceny Auto 0.0 %	37	33	12.1 %	240	232	3.4 %
Total 54.0 %	263	202	30.2 %	1,863	1,673	11.4 %
Patrol 53.1 %	258	200	28.0 %	1,825	1,640	11.3 %
Transit 00.0 %	5	2	150.0 %	34	30	13.3 %
Housing 0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	4	3	33.3 %
Shooting Victims 0.0 %	10	1	900.0 %	30	14	114.3 %
Shooting Incidents 0.0 %	3	1	200.0 %	16	11	45.5 %
UCR Rape* 00.0 %	1	12	-91.7 %	43	43	0.0 %
Other Sex Crimes 0.0 %	9	6	50.0 %	81	65	24.6 %
Petit Larceny 49.3 %	159	215	-26.0 %	1,254	1,724	-27.3 %
Med. Assault 57.1 %	73	54	35.2 %	593	557	6.5 %
Hate Crimes 0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	2	0	- %
Traffic Fatalities 0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	3	4	-25.0 %

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

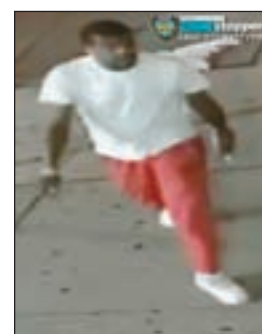
- Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSPPL) definitions.

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

Source: NYPD

**MAJOR CRIME STATISTICS** in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for the 28-day period ending Sept. 1, 2024, compared to the same timeframe in 2023, and (right) year-to-date major crimes in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct as of Sept. 1, 2024, compared to the same timeframe in 2023.

nection with a robbery and assault that occurred in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Monday, Aug. 12, at around 11.30 p.m. in the vicinity of West 190th Street and Jerome Avenue, a 57-year-old male victim was approached by a group of five while walking home, and the group kicked and punched the victim multiple times before stealing his wallet, cellphone and debit card. They said the group remained at the location after the incident, and the victim sustained injuries but was not taken to a hospital.



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 pub-

lic 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.



## Olinville: Couple Sought for Assault on Woman, 82

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the two people seen in the accompanying photos above who they say are sought in connection with an assault that occurred on the border of Olinville and Williamsbridge. Police said that on Friday, Aug. 2, at around 7.05 p.m., at East 212th Street and White Plains Road, an 82-year-old female victim was approached by two unidentified people who punched her body multiple times, slamming her to the ground, and stomping on her body multiple times.

They said the two fled the location on foot, traveling eastbound on East 212th Street towards Holland Avenue, while the victim was transported by EMS to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi in stable condition. They said the first suspect is described as male, has a medium build and a dark complexion. They said he was last seen wearing a white polo shirt, blue shorts, and grey and black sneakers. They said the second suspect is described as female, has a medium build and medium complexion, and was last seen wearing a black t-shirt, black shorts, white sneakers, and was carrying a black cross-body bag.



# Back-to-School Giveaways a Welcome Gift for Parents

STORY & PHOTOS BY MIRIAM QUIÑONES

With the cost of school supplies not getting any cheaper, various back-to-school giveaways held before the start of the school year served as a welcome gift to many struggling parents. On Friday, Aug. 23, a back-to-school giveaway was held on Fordham Plaza in Belmont, where backpacks and school supplies were handed out to families.

Other stands / vendors gave out other school resources to parents, along with free Bronx Zoo tickets. There were also performers and dancers, and games and facepainting for everyone. About 1,000 people were in attendance.



**A MUSICIAN PLAYS** the drums at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Aug. 23, 2024.



**A VOLUNTEER TRIES** to follow the dance movements of two young at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**MEGAN BLAGDEN, NYC** urban park ranger shows a skull to a parent at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**DANCERS, INCLUDING THE** daughter of one of the dancers, put on a show at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**CHILDREN PLAY AND** draw with chalk as parents line up to get bookbags at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**SOME CHILDREN SIT** down to play video games in front of a van at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**HE FORDHAM URBAN** Plunge freshman volunteer took time out to capture some fun photos at a back-to-school giveaway on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.



**AS A CHILD** climbs a rock climber, officers watch out for his safety during a back-to-school giveaway held on Fordham Plaza in Belmont on Friday, Aug. 23, 2024.

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## Letters To The Editor

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

### Letter on MTA in Norwood News July 27-Aug 8, 2024

Mr [Larry] Penner's letter to the editor needs a big clarification, and he claims to be such an expert on the MTA. He knows very well that the six-figure retirements are rare and do not happen to the rank and file conductors, train operators, and bus drivers in MTA/NYC Transit.

I'm a retired NYC Transit worker and my retirement is nowhere near six figures. I have never seen or heard of a subway conductor or train operator reaching that level. Maybe it happened in the distant past, but it would be very, very rare. There have been problems on the LIRR and maybe Metro North over time, but supposedly this has been corrected.

As for large amounts of overtime in the last year, that is something that was fixed by contract on the subways and buses, a long time ago. The bump-up is very small because the final retirement award is based on the three best (highest earning) consecutive years. There is

a percentage formula cap on a last year bump-up. Therefore, you cannot have a huge last year credited to your retirement.

Don't think for a second that every day, hardworking conductors, train operators, or bus drivers wind up with a six-figure retirement. We DON'T! For the record, there are a number of different contracts within the MTA's different departments. So Mr. Penner, since you are so much of an expert, please use your expertise and do not paint such broad brush [strokes]. If you know of a problematic contract, be specific. Don't confuse the public by making them think that all MTA workers are on their way to six-figure retirements.

**Mickey Burke**  
Norwood

### Community Held Hostage

Norwood is a fairly quiet community, a place that you can generally get decent sleep at night. With the exception of the number 4 train, everything is good. Unfortunately, a new group of people have decided to change this. With no consideration for anyone else, they have held the northwest Bronx [hostage] to their loud noise (music) every Friday, Satur-

day, and Sunday.

From the northwest corner of West Gunhill Road and Jerome Avenue, they set up jumbo speakers and blast their music all night from 9 p.m. to the early morning hours of 5.30 a.m. On Aug. 24, the police came by four hours later, after countless 311 noise complaints, and put a stop to it. They didn't issue any summonses or confiscate their [equipment] because 15 minutes later, the music was even louder.

You can hear it from Tracy Towers to 213<sup>th</sup> Street. Apparently, the police cars don't patrol this neighborhood because the music played for another five hours with no stop from police. The commander of the 52 Precinct and the city councilman, with his district leader, need to be more involved in a community being held hostage by music during inappropriate hours that doesn't let people sleep, like mothers with young children and those who have to get up early to work on the weekends.

No consideration, no respect...who are these people that have come into our neighborhood and changed the character? For someone who has been living here for 43 years, this is not acceptable.

**Abraham Cruz,**  
Norwood

*Editor's Note: Norwood News has contacted the NYPD for comment and follow-up, and will share any feedback we receive.*

### Lights Out in the Oval

The Reservoir Oval Park has about 8 to 10 lights completely out, especially around the woman's bathroom, basketball court, and children's playground. We have contacted 3-1-1 so many times, with no luck! This makes dog walking at night pretty creepy and dangerous. Please help! Thank you.

**Denise Vida,**  
Norwood

*Editor's Note: Norwood News has contacted NYC Parks' department a few times on this issue. We will share any feedback we receive.*

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

## Driver Sought in Chain Reaction Crash

By DAVID GREENE

Police are looking for a hit-and-run driver who veered out of his lane and collided with a truck in Bedford Park. A second vehicle then plowed into the back of the truck. According to police the crash was reported at 12.20 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 24, at Jerome Avenue and Minerva Place in Bedford Park.

They said a 61-year-old male driver was driving a 2002 Ford box truck, heading northbound on Jerome Avenue,

when the driver of a Dodge SUV headed southbound crossed over into oncoming traffic, colliding with the truck.

They said at the same time, a 49-year-old man driving a 2016 Honda struck the back of the box truck. Police said the driver of the Dodge fled the crash scene on foot. Fire Department officials said one victim was taken to St. Barnabas Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Police had no description of the driver of the Dodge

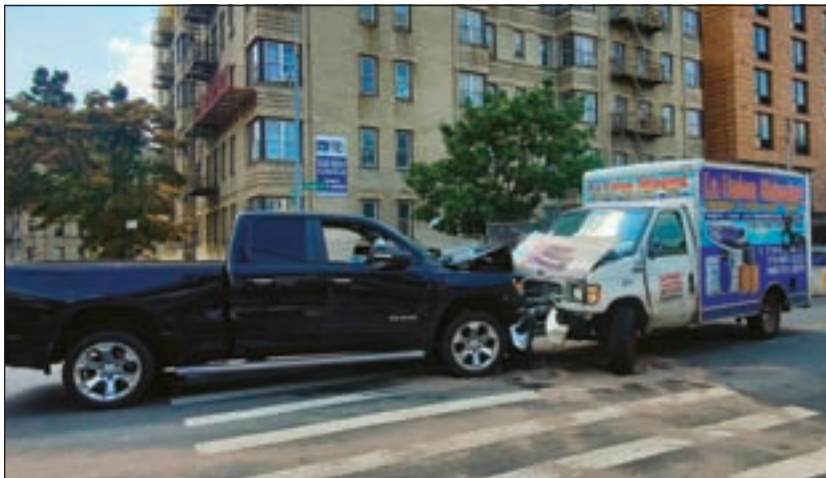


Photo by Miriam Quiñones

**TWO VEHICLES ARE** seen damaged following a hit and run road collision on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024, at Jerome Avenue and Minerva Place in Bedford Park.



Photo courtesy of P.S. / M.S. Sheila Mencher School

**VANESSA MARTINEZ,** A student at P.S. / M.S. Sheila Mencher School in Van Cortlandt Village, is seen at a non-mammalian exhibit at the Bronx Zoo during a recent visit.



Photo courtesy of P.S. / M.S. Sheila Mencher School

**NAVAEH GUERRO,** A student at P.S. / M.S. Sheila Mencher School in Van Cortlandt Village, is seen against a backdrop of giraffes at the Bronx Zoo during a recent visit.

## Local Students Enjoy Trip to the Zoo

BY DR. JOYCE BLOOM

Under the leadership of Principal Serge Marshall Davis, members of the Animals and Exercise Club at P.S. / M.S. 95 Sheila Mencher School enjoy special opportunities, and recently that included a trip to the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo.

During their recent trip, students recounted stories of excit-

ing sightings of flamingos, brown bears, tigers, wild dogs, red pandas, reptiles, giraffes, turtles and crocodiles. In addition, they said beautiful big peacocks strutted around the zoo, loose among the visitors.

The trip was a chance for students to learn first-hand about animals, develop empathy for them, and get some good exercise for the day.



# NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY ARIEL PACHECO



## Back-to-School Event

The Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center is hosting a Back-to-School event on Saturday, Sept. 7, from noon to 2 p.m. at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Backpacks, school supplies, and books will be distributed throughout the event. For more information, call (718) 543-8672.

## New York State Quitline

The New York State Quitline is focused on resources that help college students and young adults learn to quit use of commercial tobacco products. Representatives said that as the adult brain continues to develop into the mid-20s, using cigarettes, e-cigarettes or even modern alternative products such as nicotine pouches can create an endless cycle of stress and addiction. For more information, visit <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>.

The New York State Quitline offers Learn2QuitNY, a multi-week texting

program with daily alerts to help participants learn techniques to cut back and eventually altogether quit all forms of tobacco products. Interested participants can enroll by texting QUITNOW to 333888 or by visiting [nysmokefree.com/text](https://nysmokefree.com/text).

In addition, college students can contact the New York State Quitline for coaching support by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-

8487) or by visiting [nysmokefree.com](https://nysmokefree.com). Those who are 18 years of age and older also can receive free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medications, usually in the form of patches, gum or lozenges.

## Health and Safety Fair

Join State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33) for a health and safety fair to learn about vital resources and substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery. Discuss improving public health and safety in your neighborhood. The fair will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 17, at Poe Park on Grand Concourse between East 192nd Street and East Kingsbridge Road Bronx, NY 10458 from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-2034.

## Fresh Produce Drive

Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia (A.D. 86) is hosting a fresh produce drive on Friday, Sept. 6, at 2175C Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10453 at 1 p.m. Everything is on a first come, first served basis for District 86 residents only. Bring your own bags and proof of residence. For more information, call (718) 933-6909.

## Job Fair

Join VIP Community Services at their job fair on Friday, Sept. 6, at the parking lot adjacent to 1870 Crotona Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Refreshments

will be served. For more information, call (347) 574-0445.

## Free Prenatal and Gestational Diabetes Culinary Workshop

SBH Teaching Kitchen, in partnership with NYC Health, is hosting a free prenatal and gestational diabetes culinary workshop on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 4507 Third Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457 from noon to 1.30 p.m. Topics include understanding the pregnant body and blood sugar in pregnancy, nutrition and meal planning for pregnancy, and managing stress with mindful movement and meal prep. For more information, email [SBHTeachingKitchen@sbhny.org](mailto:SBHTeachingKitchen@sbhny.org) or call (718) 960-3843.

## NYC Boss Up Veterans Business Pitch Competition

Submit an application and pitch your business to NYC Boss Up Veterans, where judges will select eight winners to receive \$20,000. To qualify, you must own a business that is located or operates in the five boroughs, be 18 years old, and be a veteran of the U.S. military or child, spouse, sibling, or parent of a Gold Star Family or a military spouse. Submit your application by Sunday, Sept. 15. For more information, visit <https://www.nycbossup.org/veterans>.

## Affordable Housing Lotteries

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

others:

- 665 East 183<sup>rd</sup> Street, with a deadline of Sep. 13.
- 4720 3rd Avenue, with a deadline of Oct. 11.
- 3187 Grand Concourse Avenue, with a deadline of Sep. 13.
- 967 East 167th Street, with a deadline of Sep. 6.

HPD frequently extends the announced deadlines. For more infor-

mation, visit

<https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/searchlotteries>.

## Tour De Bronx 2024 Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for the Tour De Bronx 2024 taking place on Sunday, Oct. 6, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., starting at 161st Street and Grand Concourse, and ending at the New York Botanical Garden. Full and partial-day volunteer opportunities are available. For more information, email [btc@boedc.org](mailto:btc@boedc.org).

## Teen Budgeting 101

The Mosholu Public Library is hosting a Teen Budgeting 101 class for ages 13-18 on Monday, Sept. 9, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 285 East 205th Street, Bronx, NY 10467. The class will discuss how to budget to get through college, emergencies, and life. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

## Gardening Tuesday at Bronx Park

Join the Bronx River Alliance for stewardship activities such as litter removal, weeding, mulching, watering, planting at different rain gardens, and newly planted tree sites along the Bronx River on Tuesday, Sept. 10, 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. For more information, call (718) 542-4124.

## Community Famers' Market

Join the James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center for its Community Farmers' Market every Saturday until Oct. 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the corner of Goulden and Sedgwick Avenues and Mosholu Parkway South, near the north side of DeWitt Clinton High School Educational Campus, located at 100 W Mosholu Parkway South, Bronx, NY 10468. For more information, email [contact@jbolc.org](mailto:contact@jbolc.org)

# AG Warns of AI Video Investment Scams

(continued from page 7)

sender has been validated.

The AG also said to be wary of unsolicited investment opportunities, especially those that come via email, social media, or phone calls, adding that legitimate firms do not aggressively push potential investors to make quick decisions or disclose sensitive information through such channels.

She also recommended enabling Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on all accounts, particularly those related to finance and email. MFA requires more than one method of verification, making it much harder for scammers to access people's accounts — even if they use sophisticated techniques like deepfakes.

James also said to bear in mind that such transactions are almost always irreversible, and urged any resi-

dents who decide to invest to preserve all paperwork and communications.

"Sophisticated scammers are using AI to impersonate trusted business leaders and scam vulnerable New Yorkers out of their hard-earned money," said James. "Manipulated videos advertising phony investment scams are spreading like wildfire on social media, and New Yorkers should know how to avoid falling victim to these schemes."

Anyone who may have been a victim of this type of scam should report it to the AG's office via the following link <https://ag.ny.gov/financial-fraud-complaint-form>, or by calling 1-800-771-7755. James said any identifying information provided by residents to her office will be protected according to law and policies on the safeguarding of identifying information.

Like us to look into a news story for you?

CALL US AT (929) 318 6595



# Out & About

Compiled by ARIEL PACHECO

## EVENTS

Do you have a talent you want to share with your community? Join **Open Mic Night** presented by Bedford Park Congregational Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana and Seventh Day Adventist Church on Saturday, Sept. 21, at 5 p.m. at 3008 Bainbridge Ave., Bronx, NY 10458. All are welcome.

Join the Woodlawn Conservancy for **Star Gazing with The Amateur Astronomers Association** on Friday, Sept. 13, from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 4199 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY 10470. Come out and see the moon, stars, and planets through telescopes and learn from the Amateur Astronomers Association. Entry is free, but tickets are required. For more information, call (718) 920-050.

The Belmont Business Improvement District is hosting its annual **Ferragosto Festival** on Sunday, Sept. 8, from noon to 6 p.m. between East 187th Street and Crescent Avenue, Bronx, NY 10458. The festival is a day-long celebration of Italian culture and tradition, featuring delicious food from local small businesses, live music, and amusing entertainment. For more information, email [info@bronxlittleitaly.com](mailto:info@bronxlittleitaly.com).

## ARTS

The Bronx Historical Society will begin displaying **Historias: The Stories Behind the Images** on Thursday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467. This interactive multimedia exhibition will cover a broad range of issues and topics that have impacted the people of The Bronx over the last four decades. For more information, call (718) 881-8900.

## SPOKEN WORD

The Bronx County Historical Society invites residents to an afternoon of

poetry at Edgar Allen Poe Collage, 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10458, on Saturday, Sept. 14, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. hosted by Bronx Poet Laureat Kay Bell. "Unleash Your Voice" is a poetry slam, where words come alive and emotions run deep. Bring your best evocative poems to enter the slam. Three winners will be announced. Sign up to participate at [www.iamkaybell.com](http://www.iamkaybell.com). Prizes will be awarded.

## MUSIC

The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts presents a **Rumba, Mambo, & Salsa Concert** on Saturday, Sept. 14, at 8 p.m. at 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468. The concert will feature Cuban artists, Lucrecia, and Xiomara Laugart. For more information, visit <https://www.lehmancenter.org/events/rumba-mambo-salsa>.

## KIDS

Moshulu Library is hosting **Family Storytime and Crafts** on Saturday,

Sept. 7, at 11 a.m. at 285 East 205th Street, Bronx, NY 10467. There will be stories, singing and crafts to help your child build important early learning skills. This event is targeted for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

## MOVEMENT

Shape Up NYC is hosting a **Running Group** on Friday, Sept. 6, at 6 p.m. at Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Register online and find more information at [www.nyc.gov/shapeupnyc](http://www.nyc.gov/shapeupnyc).

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is hosting its annual **Out of The Darkness Walk** on Sunday, Sept. 22, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468. The walk is to raise awareness and funds for suicide awareness and prevention. For more information, email [walks@afsp.org](mailto:walks@afsp.org).



## Healthy Snacks and Meals for a Successful School Year

By NAOMI PEMBERTON

As the new school year begins, parents and caregivers seek ways to nourish kids' bodies. Healthy snacks and meals are a must for the health, comfort, energy levels, and brain development of growing kids.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the best time to introduce kids to healthy eating habits is when they're young. The NIH developed a program called "We Can!" for caregivers and communities, to help kids aged 8-13 maintain a healthy weight by encouraging healthy eating habits, physical activity, and limited screen time.

Some of the program's nutrition topics are added sugar, nutritional label facts, tips for picky eaters, ways to eat more produce, and more. For more information, visit <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>, or call 1-866-35-WE CAN.

Young people should have about 1,500 to 2,000 calories each day, made up of meals and snacks of healthy, high-nutri-

ent foods like fruit, veggies, nuts, whole grains, and low-fat protein. This daily calorie count also includes calories from beverages. Healthy snacks and meals will boost a young person's energy and prevent overeating at the next meal. Now consider "junk food," food that is high in sugar, salt, oil and white flour, and low in fiber and nutrients like vitamins and minerals.

Large amounts of these foods, including chips, fries, sweets, and sweetened drinks, may well lead to weight gain. The rate of obesity in kids is higher than ever before. Large amounts of high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks raise blood sugar and damage our insulin hormone (which regulates our bodies' energy supplies), paving the way for Type 2 Diabetes. Excess "junk food" and drinks are also responsible for vitamin deficiencies, headaches, stomach aches, constipation or diarrhea, tiredness and difficulty concentrating.

As a caregiver, you have the power to guide your young people, from toddlers to teens, toward healthy snacks and meals. Listed below are some healthy and quick back-to-school snacks and meals.

### Healthy Snack Options

- Fresh fruit in a bowl or on a skewer with yogurt dip
- Whole-grain crackers with peanut butter or cheese
- Trail mix with nuts and dried fruit; you can even include some chocolate.
- Homemade energy balls or bars made with oats and honey

### Nutritious Meal Ideas

- Protein, starch, and low-carb vegetables in these portions:
- sandwiches on wholegrain bread with proteins like deli meat or chicken, peanut butter, egg, hummus and veggies like lettuce, tomatoes and cucumber
- soup and salad combos
- chili, stews or curries that include vegetable and protein (beans or meat) You can include a starch like rice, noodles or potatoes inside or serve a small portion on the side.
- overnight oats with fruit and nuts, or regular hot oatmeal with fruit, nuts, and small amounts of sweetener
- scrambled eggs and veggies or an egg omelet and veggies

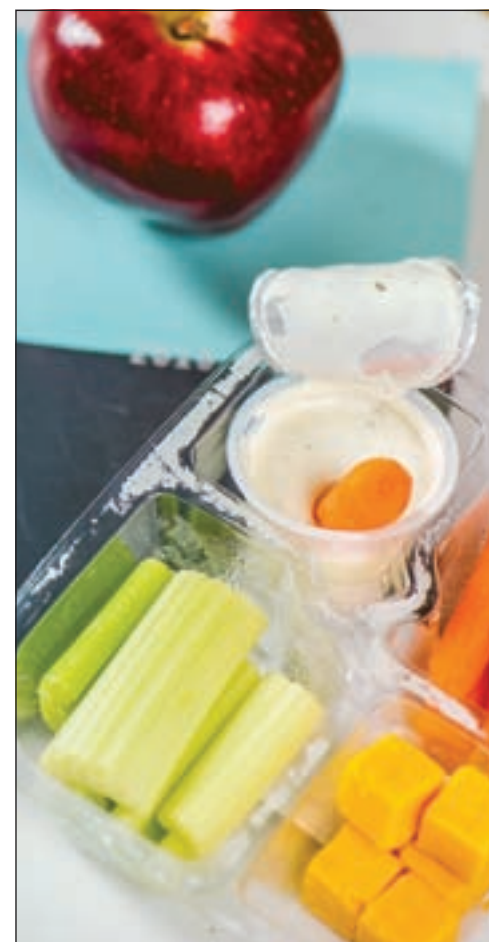
### Tips to Save Time

- Plan and prep meals on the weekends. Cook for an hour and you need only reheat on school nights!
- Buy frozen veggies, already cleaned and pre-cut which can be steamed; just steam in a microwave or pot.
- Pair your starch and protein with a salad of leafy greens and shredded carrots or whole cherry tomatoes. Salads, which are eaten raw, can be much quicker than cooking vegetables. Try serving two cups of salad alongside a cup of cooked pasta and

meat sauce.

Prepare your young ones for a successful and healthy school year by incorporating these nutritious snack and meal suggestions into their daily routine. Happy, healthy eating!

Naomi Pemberton is a senior project manager at Montefiore's Office of Community & Population Health.





# Teacher Shot inside Fordham Heights Classroom

By SÍLE MOLONEY

A male teacher has been released from hospital after he was shot inside a Fordham Heights school on Wednesday morning, police said. No school children were present at the time of the shooting. The school, M.S. 391, The Angelo Patri School, located on the campus of X225 Theatre Arts Production Company School at 2190 Folin Street, is next to the Twin Parks towers, the site of the fatal fire of January 2022, in which 17 people, including 8 children, mostly of Gambian descent, lost their lives.

During a press conference held outside M.S. 391, police officials, including Inspector Tracy Mulet of the school safety division, and Inspector Jeremy Scheublin, commanding officer of the 46th Precinct, joined by Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, said the incident unfolded at 11.50 a.m. when cops received a 911 call for reports of a male shot at the location.

NYPD Deputy Chief Keiyon Ramsey, executive officer for Patrol Borough Bronx, said, "Upon arrival, officers discovered a 33-year-old male with a graze wound to his right palm on the 6th floor of the building. The male victim is a teacher here at the school and was preparing his room for the first day of class tomorrow when a bullet entered the classroom through a window, striking him."

He continued, "Thankfully, there were no children inside the school or around the school at the time of the incident. Also, let me clear, this bullet was not fired from inside the school, and at this point of the investigation, we believe it was fired from a long distance away. The school was not targeted."

Ramsey concluded, "Our victim was removed to St. Barnabas Hospital where he was treated and released. One fired bullet was recovered from the classroom and processed by our evidence-

collection team. Out of an abundance of caution, tomorrow, we will have additional school safety agents and police officers on site to ensure the children coming tomorrow and their parents feel safe and are safe."

Deputy Chief Louis Deceglie, commanding officer of Detective Bureau Bronx, said the bureau was working diligently to try to determine where exactly the shot came from and who fired it. "We're currently searching all rooftops nearby looking for both ballistic evidence and video evidence," he said. Deceglie added that police were asking anyone with information to please call 1800-577-8477 or 1800 577-8477-TIPS.

In response to a question about the direction of the shot, police said they believe it came from an elevated surface. In response to another question about the availability of guns in the borough, police added that their number one priority was to get guns off the streets.

In a separate statement, Gibson said in part, "On the eve of a new school year, we experienced a deeply troubling incident that should never occur in our community. We are immensely relieved and grateful that [the teacher] is recovering, but this situation highlights a broader public safety issue that demands our urgent attention."

She added, "Our schools should be sanctuaries of learning and growth, not places of fear. The safety of our students and educators must be our top priority, and incidents like these underscore the need for more effective measures to protect our residents from gun violence. Out of precaution, we are adding additional school support staff, including counselors at MS 391, and additional School Safety Agents."

She said to ensure the continued safety of all in and out of the classroom, elected leaders would continue to work with local law enforcement and community leaders. "Our thoughts are with the affected teacher and his family, and we stand united in our determination to foster a safe and supportive educational atmosphere for all."

Everytown gun violence awareness advocates announced on Aug. 30 that Polymer80, the largest producer of ghost gun kits and parts in the country, has shut down. Ghost guns are guns that are ordered online and assembled at home. The group said the announcement fol-



Screenshot courtesy of the NYPD

**AFTER ONE SCHOOL** employee was shot while inside M.S. 391 at 2190 Folin Street in Fordham Heights on Wednesday morning, Sept. 3, 2024, police and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson hold a press conference to update the media and public about the incident.

lows multiple lawsuits brought by Everytown Law, adding that Polymer80's non-serialized, untraceable ghost guns, bought and built without background checks, have been fueling the gun violence crisis for years.

As reported, the family of the late, 16-year-old, Bronx teen, Angellyh Marieh Yambo, had also filed a civil lawsuit on March 27 against Polymer80, Inc., which equipped Angellyh's 17-year-old shooter, Jeremiah Ryan, with an untraceable firearm. In response to news of the shutdown, The Angellyh Yambo Foundation issued a statement, saying, "The shutdown of Polymer80, a manufacturer of firearm kits, is a positive step that could help save lives."

The statement continued, "However, vigilance is required, as the company may attempt to evade the law by operating under a different name or relocating to another state. Continued availability of these firearm kits on the streets have enabled individuals to continue to build kits which have become a weapon of choice for criminals; they are using these ghost guns to harm innocent people and destroy families." Polymer80 was headquartered in Dayton, Nevada.

Angellyh, who spent much of her childhood in Kingsbridge Heights and who was honored with a street co-naming ceremony in the neighborhood, was just 16 when she was fatally shot while walking home from University Prep Charter High School in Mott Haven, along with two of her friends on April 8, 2022. Her family, friends, and teacher said she was a talented artist and had her sights set on becoming a doctor. Ryan was later sentenced to 15 years for her unintentional death.

Congressman Ritchie Torres (NY-15) who represents Fordham Heights, among other areas, visited M.S. 391 on Oct. 30, 2023, to fund its urban farming

program which is run by NY Sun Works. The congressman is also behind the introduction in Congress of the Angellyh Yambo Gun Free Zone Expansion Act, introduced in memory of Angellyh.

The Angellyh Yambo Foundation also issued a statement in reference to the latest school shooting in Fordham Heights, writing, "Passing the Angellyh Yambo Gun Free Zone Expansion Act of 2023 could provide the legal protection to effectively enforce the gun-free zones and provide school safety. We must act to protect our students, teachers, and staff from gun violence, both within and beyond school grounds. This cannot happen without the support of our political leaders."

Norwood News contacted NYC Department of Education (DOE) and the congressman for comment on the latest incident at M.S. 391. Jenna Lyle, a spokesperson for the DOE, said, "This egregious display of violence is both upsetting and reprehensible. NYPD immediately responded to the scene where one educator sustained non-life-threatening injuries. We will provide additional support to this school community."

On the same day as the shooting at M.S. 391, NBC News reported on a separate school shooting in Georgia in which two students, and two teachers were killed. A 14-year-old is in custody.

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

*\*David Greene contributed to this story.*



**AFTER ONE SCHOOL** employee was shot while inside M.S. 391 at 2190 Folin Street in Fordham Heights on Wednesday morning, Sept. 3, 2024, media are seen at the scene of the incident. Photo by David Greene





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## Public and Community Meetings

The **52<sup>nd</sup> PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** monthly meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of the month sometimes virtually and sometimes in person. Details for Sept. are to be confirmed still. Call the 52nd Precinct Community Affairs office at (718) 220-5824 to be added to the email distribution list.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 (CB7)** general board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 6.30 p.m. at 243 East 204<sup>th</sup> Street, The Bronx. Contact [KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:KCabreraCarrera@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list. All meetings are in person unless otherwise notified by Bronx CB7.

The next **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8** full board (hybrid) meeting will be held on Thursday, Sept. 12, at 7 p.m. at In Tech Academy Library, 2975 Tibbet Avenue, The Bronx. Contact [BX08@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:BX08@cb.nyc.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

The next **BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** meeting will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 2. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. South in Apt. B1 (lobby floor). For more details, please contact [bedfordmosholu@verizon.net](mailto:bedfordmosholu@verizon.net).

## CORRECTIONS

In the July 25-August 7, 2024 edition of the *Norwood News*, on page 19 of our front-page story entitled, "Bedford Park Gets a Clean Up," we reported that new European-style, on street containers, around four cubic yards long and holding the equivalent of 28 large bags of trash, were due to be rolled out across New York City in 2025, according to NYC Department of Sanitation officials. However, the Sanitation department later clarified that the containers would only be rolled out in Manhattan's Community District 9 next year. "While we plan for this to expand citywide, we do not yet have a timeline for an expansion of the program," they wrote.

In the September 5-18, 2024, edition of the *Norwood News*, in the story entitled, "Bedford Park Resident Receives B.S. in International Transport & Trade" on page 13, Mickey Bourke (Burke) was referenced as Keri Ann Campbell's father. Burke requested this be changed to "dad."

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# Stolen Van Suspect Pleads Innocence

(continued from page 1)

rested Edwings Irizarry, 45, of Briggs Avenue who was charged with grand larceny auto, reckless endangerment, fleeing from police in a motor vehicle, criminal possession of stolen property, petit larceny, resisting arrest, leaving the scene of an injury, obstruction of governmental administration, criminal mischief: reckless property damage, reckless driving, aggravated unlicensed operator, leaving the scene of property damage as well as a Department of Motor Vehicles violation of driving without a license.

On Sunday, Sept. 1, Irizarry professed his innocence, telling *Norwood News* that he had purchased the van three days earlier from a man he would often see driving around in different vans in the area. Irizarry alleged, "I gave him \$4,000."

On the day of the incident, Irizarry said, "Two Mexicans come rushing up (to the van) telling me it's their van. I don't know what's going on, so I take off." He continued, "All of a sudden, I hear sirens, cops are running to the van, breaking the window."

Irizarry, sporting a brace on his wrist, as well as swelling to his arms, claimed that during his arrest, he was punched in the face, hit with an officer's nightstick, and maced before being slammed to the floor. *Norwood News* contacted the NYPD for comment and will share any updates we receive.

With no workman's compensation and out of work since a stomach operation in May, Irizarry said of his van purchase, "It was a dream come true; I needed a van." Irizarry said he planned to use the van for work, taking odd carpentry and construction jobs.

According to the criminal complaint relating to the incident, obtained by *Norwood News*, the grand larceny charge against Irizarry was dropped, but he still

faces a felony count of reckless endangerment and at least six misdemeanor charges, including fleeing a police officer and reckless endangerment.

An extract from the complaint reads, "Deponent further states he observed defendant continue to operate the aforementioned vehicle at a high rate of speed, driving on sidewalks, and causing multiple people to jump out of the way to avoid said vehicle."

It continued, "Defendant continued driving away from deponent and numerous police vehicles until he came to a stop when he collided with a parked vehicle and a fence. Deponent further states that she observed defendant exit the vehicle, did not provide his license and registration and did continue to flee on foot." Irizarry is due back in court on Sept. 26.

Meanwhile, NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) officials announced the agency has improved visibility for pedestrians at more than 300 locations through an initiative called "daylighting." They said daylighting enhances safety, by removing visibility-blocking obstructions, such as parked vehicles near intersections, so drivers more easily see pedestrians and other road users at these critical junctures.

"As students return to classrooms, we want to remind everyone to be careful when crossing intersections. Daylighting enhances safety for pedestrians by reducing drivers' blind spots and giving everyone a better view of the intersection," said NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez. "This first wave of locations is only the beginning, and we look forward to improving visibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike at even more intersections across the city."

Agency officials said the department is ahead of schedule in completing its



Photo by David Greene

**POLICE SAID THIS** allegedly stolen van was being pursued by marked police vehicles when it crashed into a parked station wagon in front of 2848 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor on Saturday, Aug. 17, 2024.

work on the new initiative by the end of this year's construction season in mid-November, meeting their goal of adding daylighting to 1,000 locations in 2024. They said they have already completed 300 locations, with the remaining 700 in various stages of development.

They said the new design will reduce speeding, improve visibility, and help protect thousands of school children as they make their way to and from the classroom during the new school year. They said intersections pose a unique safety challenge in New York City, and crashes at intersections typically comprise 51 percent of all fatalities, and 68 percent of all injuries in a year.

For pedestrians, they said the dangers are more pronounced: 59 per-



Photo courtesy of DOT

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF** Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez speaks at a press conference in Washington Heights on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024 announcing a new safety initiative called daylighting at various city intersections.

cent of pedestrian fatalities and 77 percent of pedestrian traffic injuries occur at intersections.

DOT officials said a total of 314 locations were daylighted as of August 2024. Of these locations, 33 were in The Bronx, 45 were in Brooklyn, one was on the Brooklyn/Queens border, 36 were in Manhattan, 153 were in Queens, and 46 were on Staten Island. Nearly half of the locations were hardened with physical infrastructure like bike corrals, granite blocks, or turn calming using rubber speed bumps. The full list of locations is available on DOT's website.

Officials said locations were selected based on a variety of factors, including crash data, cycling and micro-mobility demand, equity, and study testing conditions.

"Safety is not only critical inside the classroom, but also as students move about their communities and travel to and from school," said Schools Chancellor David C. Banks. "I'm grateful to the Department of Transportation for prioritizing this important initiative for the well-being of our kids, and all New Yorkers."



Photo by David Greene

**POLICE SEARCH FOR** an alleged van thief along East 198th Street and Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor on Saturday, Aug. 17, 2024.



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