



NORWOOD NEWS

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Photo by Emily Sawaked

NEW YORK CITY Mayor Eric Adams delivers opening remarks at the PAGV summit held at Fordham University in Fordham Manor, The Bronx, on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

By EMILY SAWAKED

With June marking Gun Violence Awareness Month, Prosecutors Against Gun Violence (PAGV), in partnership with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA), held their annual conference for the first time in The Bronx, at Fordham

University, in the jurisdiction and under the watchful eye of Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, co-chair of PAGV, alongside City Attorney for Columbus, Ohio Zach Klein.

This year's summit was centered on community restoration and gun violence pre-

vention. With callbacks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summit title was "Prosecutors and the Other Pandemic: Preventing Gun Violence, Restoring Communities."

Prosecutors from around the country gathered at the McShane Campus Center, for the

two-day event to learn from each other, share thoughts, and discuss how each was working in their respective jurisdictions, to combat gun violence which, according to the PAGV, has been on the rise nationally since the outbreak of COVID-19.

(continued on page 23)



Art Event in Oval Seeks to Keep Focus on Gaza
pg 2



Bronx Week Parade Returns to Mosholu Pkwy
pg 18



Two Men Plead Guilty in Fentanyl Daycare Case
pg 19

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Publisher
Mosholu Preservation Corporation
Editor-In-Chief, Norwood News
Síle Moloney
smoloney@norwoodnews.org

Reporter
Ariel Pacheco

Intern
Ashley Castillo

Regular Contributors
David Greene, Miriam Quiñones

Contributors
Emily Sawaked, Tom Corsillo, Carlos Tejada, Gary Axelbank

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Art Event Held in Oval in Support of Gaza

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & MIRIAM QUIÑONES**

Bronx Neighbors for Palestine held a “Make Art to Let Gaza Live” event in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood, by the Reservoir Oval West entrance, on Sunday afternoon, June 9. The event was organized in efforts to raise awareness about the plight of everyday Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank amid the ongoing war with Israel.

Many are either refugees or are living under bombardment amid the latest war, following the Oct 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas at the Nova Music Festival and in the surrounding area of the southeastern section of Israel. “We are a group of people living or working in The Bronx, coming together to stand against U.S. government complicity in the genocide occurring in Gaza,” a statement on a flier advertising the event read.

The Oct. 7, 2023, attacks resulted in the deaths of around 1,200 Israelis, according to Israeli officials, while dozens more Israelis were taken hostage. Some have since been released while others remain in captivity. Meanwhile, the military response by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) has resulted in the deaths of more than 35,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to Al Jazeera, and injury to more than 70,000, with some 10,000 missing, presumed dead under the rubble of the destroyed territory.

Earlier this week, CNN reported that in an operation carried out by Israel to rescue four more Israeli hostages, Gazan officials said more than 200 Palestinians were killed. Additionally, Al Jazeera also reported that Israelis have now killed at least 502 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank area of Israel since Oct. 7, 2023.

Meanwhile, many New York politi-



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

AROUND 20 ADULTS and children, including José Alfaro, Lily Plevén, Anita Dutt, Eileen Markey, and Janet Clarke, who is Jewish and part of Bronx Neighbors for Palestine (BN4P), Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP), and Pam Sporn, director of Grito Productions, participate in the “Make Art to Let Gaza Live” event held in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Sunday, June 9, 2024, drawing on the ground using colorful chalk to raise awareness about the plight of everyday Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

cal and other leaders condemned a protest held outside a Lower Manhattan art exhibit held on Monday, June 10, commemorating the victims of the Nova Music Festival terror attacks. Pro-Palestinian demonstrators reportedly lit smoke canisters and flares outside the exhibit. “You do not call for peace and wave flags of Hamas,” New York City Mayor Eric Adams said of the protest, according to a report by CBS News. “You do not call for peace and then come to a memorial site. That’s like you are desecrating the graves [of the victims].”

At the Norwood art event, around 20 adults and children showed up and drew artwork on the Oval’s pavement, and also carried flags and banners, some of which read, “AIPAC gave \$514,002 to Ritchie Torres who opposes a ceasefire.” According to its website, AIPAC or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee “stands with those who stand with Israel.” An extract reads, “The AIPAC

PAC is a bipartisan, pro-Israel political action committee, the largest pro-Israel PAC in America and has contributed more resources directly to candidates than any other PAC. 98% of AIPAC-backed candidates won their general election races in 2022.”

We reached out to the congressman for comment on the group’s comments/banner. It is not the first time that protestors have made this type of comment about Torres, who has been vociferous in his support of Israel. While we did not receive an immediate response as of press date, we had previously reported on similar allegations of AIPAC funding to the Torres campaign in the context of a prior protest held outside Torres’ office in December 2023.

When we contacted Torres on that occasion for comment, he said, “The notion that AIPAC has contributed a half a million dollars to my campaign is a factually false claim based on a misunderstanding of federal campaign finance law. AIPAC has both a PAC and a SuperPAC. The PAC CANNOT contribute more than the legal limit of \$10,000, and the SuperPAC has spent nothing on my behalf.”

When *Norwood News* previously reviewed the congressman’s campaign contributions, as reported, we found that 18.1 percent of contributions to his campaign were from AIPAC, a total of \$222,040, the second highest contributor after Act Blue (a Democratic Party PAC). We reached back out to the congressman for comment at the time. We did not receive an immediate response.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

LILY PLEVÉN HELPS others with some colorful drawings on the pavement of the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Sunday, June 9, 2024, as part of a “Make Art to Let Gaza Live” event to raise awareness of the plight of everyday Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

ATTENDEES, INCLUDING THE organizers, of the “Make Art to Let Gaza Live” event, held in the Williamsbridge Oval in Norwood on Sunday, June 9, 2024, to raise awareness of the plight of everyday Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, pose for a photo at the end of the event.

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By **DAVID GREENE**



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on New York Gov. Kathy Hochul's last minute decision to temporarily halt the implementation of congestion pricing tolls for commuters driving into Manhattan which was due to go into effect on June 30, and help fund the MTA.



"I kind of have a problem with it [the toll] a little bit because we're already paying \$2.90 and we're still dealing with the congestion, the rats, the homeless people. We're already paying too much, and they want people to pay \$15 extra to go through the same things. [It's] a little outrageous. There is violence, there's shootings on the trains, robberies. The MTA is getting money all the time; they have enough."

Arianna Dixon,
Harlem resident visiting Olinville
Photo by David Greene



"I don't drive. I take the subway and the buses. I don't agree with the toll because people out here are suffering and starving and they're making it impossible. I think the MTA is keeping the money for themselves, and we're out here starving and suffering and paying these bills since the prices went up after COVID-19. They spent all this money on the cameras; it's useless."

Valada Hill,
Norwood
Photo by David Greene



"I think we're paying enough already; a \$15 toll is way crazy! It's temporary; it might happen in the future, but for me, I'm happy with what the governor did. The subway doesn't look like it needs money. I really don't know where the money is going. They need to explain to people where the money is going. Why do they need more?"

Vocar Diallo,
Castle Hill resident visiting Norwood
Photo by David Greene



"My feeling on congestion pricing is I, basically, don't agree with it at all. I take the train almost every day. The MTA needs funding; maybe they could just charge \$10? That should be sufficient."

David Santos,
Manhattan resident visiting Bedford Park
Photo by David Greene



"I understand the difficulties of living and navigating the congestion, but why address this now? It's always been this way. When did the MTA gain so much authority here? Why hasn't anyone investigated them? They always have a surplus. How does the president of the MTA make more than the U.S. president? This will destroy businesses and jobs. I Asha some government body steps in and audits them. I'm a commuter for decades; the service never gets better. They're full of it."

Kay Cardona,
Indian Village
Photo provided by Kay Cardona

Editor's Note: The MTA announced on Friday, June 7, on the back of the governor's decision to delay congestion pricing that the lack of revenue arising from the delay may impact some of the agency's capital plan projects, including ADA upgrades like the elevator installation at Mosholu Parkway subway station.



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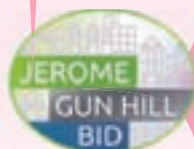
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NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

Mega Millions Second Prize-Winning Ticket Sold in The Bronx

The New York Lottery announced on June 12 that one second prize-winning ticket was sold for the June 11 *Mega Millions* drawing. The ticket was sold at the Three Star Candy Store, located at 1673 Metropolitan Avenue in The Bronx, which sold one prize-winning ticket worth \$1,000,000. The winning numbers for the *Mega Millions* game are drawn from a field of one to 70. The Mega Ball is drawn from a separate field of one to 25. The *Mega Millions* drawing is televised every Tuesday and Friday at 11 p.m.

New York Lottery officials say its lottery continues to be North America's largest and most profitable lottery, contributing \$3.7 billion in fiscal year 2022-2023 to help support education in New York State. New Yorkers struggling with a gambling addiction, or who know someone who is, can find help at [NY-ProblemGamblingHelp.org](https://www.ny.gov/problem-gambling-help), by calling New York's toll-free confidential HOPEline at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369), or texting HOPENY (467369). Standard text rates may apply.

Climate Change Superfund Law Passes Both Chambers

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (A.D. 81) said the NYS Assembly has now joined the NYS Senate in passing the Climate Change Superfund Act,

(A.3351-B) ensuring that Big Oil contributes to the mounting costs of climate catastrophe. He said the legislation, described as a landmark law, requires the biggest emitters of greenhouse gas to collectively pay \$3 billion annually over twenty-five years to share in the infrastructure investments needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change in New York State. He said this aligns with New York's ambitious climate goals, as outlined in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, which requires significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 2050. The legislation now heads to Gov. Kathy Hochul's desk for her signature.

City's Red Light Camera Program Expands

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez issued a statement on June 10 following the passage of legislation in the State Senate and Assembly to renew and expand the City's red light camera program. The law renews the City's red light camera program through Dec. 1, 2027, and allows the City to further expand the number of intersections, from 150 to 600, where it can install red light cameras in efforts to curtail speeding and prevent road accidents.

"The data speaks for itself: where we've installed red light cameras, red-light running and related crashes have dropped dramatically," Rodriguez said. "This legislation will renew our red-light camera program and allow us to quadruple the number of intersections equipped with this critical safety tool, helping us fight back against the rise in red-light related tragedies we've seen across the city. We thank State Senator Andrew Gounardes, Assemblymem-

ber Jeffrey Dinowitz, as well as the leadership in both chambers and the City Council for their support to make our streets safer."

Gillibrand Announces Law Renewing Low-Cost Internet to Nearly 2 Million NY Households

U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, representing New York, announced her bipartisan law on Wednesday, June 12, to renew the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that provides funding to low-income households for high-speed internet access. She said the program ran out of funding in May, and as a result, over 23 million American households, including over 1.7 million in New York, lost their much needed internet access funding. She said the Secure and Affordable Broadband Extension Act would provide \$6 billion for the ACP and continue providing this discount to families in need.

Feliz Announces \$2 Million to Renovate Crotona Parkway Malls

Council Member Oswald Feliz (C.D. 15) held a check presentation on Monday, June 10, between 180th Street and Southern Boulevard in The Bronx to announce that \$2 million has been allocated to renovate the Crotona Parkway Malls. He was joined by the Mary Mitchell Center, NYC Parks Commissioner Aponte, and Bronx Community Board 6 Parks committee representatives for the occasion. The council member said he wants the community to be aware of this investment to improve the residents' quality of life in the district.

Help with Summonses

NYC Department of Buildings is launching its "Get Summonses Cor-

rected (GSC)" campaign, increasing its education and outreach efforts to resolve open summonses. Its administrative enforcement unit (AEU) will host virtual and borough office events to assist individuals experiencing difficulties with certifying correction on Tuesday, June 18, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26, from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit <https://www.nyc.gov/site/buildings/dob/upcoming-events.page>.

Apply for Permanent Outdoor Dining by August 3

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) is reminding restaurant owners with outdoor set-ups that they must apply for "Dining Out NYC," the permanent outdoor dining program by Aug. 3, or remove their outdoor set-ups. Find all the info and resources needed at [nyc.gov/DiningOut](https://www.nyc.gov/DiningOut).

Truck Route Network Redesign

NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) wants to hear from New Yorkers on NYC's Truck Route Network Redesign, a system of designated roads that helps commercial vehicles navigate the city efficiently. It aims to connect primary freight origins and destinations, maximize access to industrial and commercial zones, and minimize conflicts with residential areas and vulnerable road users.

DOT officials said this network is crucial for supporting the local economy and livability by organizing neighborhood truck activity and reducing traffic congestion on non-designated routes. Respond online at <https://ny-cdotprojects.info/project-feedback-map/feedback-map-12>.

52nd Precinct Hosts 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Walk

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Over 100 students, police officers, teachers, and community members gathered at the NYPD's 52nd Precinct in Norwood for the Precinct's 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Walk on May 29.

The walk began at the stationhouse, located at 3016 Webster Avenue, and continued down Webster Avenue before turning left onto Botanical Square and coming back down Webster Avenue, finishing again at the 52nd precinct. The students arrived back at the stationhouse to a festive atmosphere, complete with a bounce house, a gaming truck, snacks and refreshments.

NYPD Community Affairs Officer Stephen Echevarria said the Precinct received more funding for this year's Walk which allowed them to bring in the bounce house, a big hit with the kids. "It's important to keep the conversa-

tion going [about autism]," he said. "It's something that should be talked about for all twelve months of the year. We have so many kids in the community that need these services, that need help, that need this type of stuff to happen for them. So, we're happy to do it and we're happy to put some smiles on their faces and they're enjoying themselves."

According to an article published in December 2020 in the Journal of Neurodevelopmental Disorders, schools with higher rates of Autism and ELL (English Language Learner) students tend to be concentrated in urban regions throughout New York and have higher representation of Black and Hispanic/Latino students, as well as higher rates of learning disabilities in general. According to researchers, further research is warranted to explore possible reasons for this phenomenon.

Maureen Fullerton, who has served as principal of P.S. 168X for 12 years, said of the event, "We started this partnership last year. It was the first time we had done it. We came up with a plan to have this walk for autism and they got all this stuff for us."

About a hundred students ranging from those in third grade to eighth grade took



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

STUDENTS FROM P.S. 168 arrive at the NYPD's 52nd Precinct, located at 3016 Webster Avenue in Norwood, before the start of the Precinct's Annual Autism Awareness Walk on May 29, 2024.

part in the walk, according to Fullerton. "I don't want to sound cliché, but it's been a joy! You know the saying, 'If you met one child with autism, you met one

child with autism' because they're so individual," Fullerton continued.

She added "It's really nice for the Pre-

(continued on page 12)

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Fordham Manor: NYPD Appeal for Help Locating Man Sought for Shots Fired

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 with some shots fired in Fordham Manor. Police said that on Monday, June 10, at around 11.55 a.m. in front of 2609 Aqueduct Avenue, an unidentified person fired several rounds from a gun and then fled the location on foot in an unknown direction. They said there were no injuries reported during this incident.

Police said that on Saturday, May 25, at around 1.32 a.m., in the vicinity of Vireo Avenue and East 235th Street, a 26-year-old woman was approached by an unidentified man from behind, placed in a chokehold, and dragged to the ground.

"The individual was last seen fleeing [the] location in a blue scooter to parts unknown," police said. "The victim sustained minor abrasions from this incident and refused further medical attention on scene." Police said the person of interest is 45-year-old Miguel Rivera. He is described as male, has a light complexion and a medium build and was last seen wearing a black hat, a black shirt, gray pants, and black sneakers. Rivera is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

University Heights: Two Sought for Assault on 78-Year-Old Man

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying and locating the people seen in the accompanying top right photo who they say are wanted in connection with an assault that occurred in University Heights. Police said that on Sunday, June 9, at around 12.25 p.m. inside 36 West Fordham Road, a 78-year-old male victim got into a dispute with two people.

"One of the individuals punched the victim in the face causing him to fall to



Woodlawn Heights: Named Person of Interest Sought for Attempted Rape

The NYPD is asking for the public's help locating the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is wanted in connection to an attempted rape that occurred in Woodlawn Heights.

the ground," police said. "The victim was transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in stable condition with injuries to his jaw and teeth. The unknown individuals were last seen fleeing the location to parts unknown in a black Jeep SUV."



Williamsbridge: Police Search for Female Suspect after Woman 37 is Fatally Slashed

A 37-year-old woman from Mt. Vernon has been murdered in Williamsbridge, and police are appealing to the public to help locate the woman seen in the accompanying photo above, who they have identified as 32-year-old Jalessa Richardson, in connection with the incident.

Police said that on Saturday, June 1, at around 6.08 a.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding a woman who had been assaulted at 1418 Oakley Street.

"Upon arrival, police observed a 37-year-old female with a slash wound to her neck, unconscious and unresponsive," police said. "EMS responded to the location and transported the victim to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi where she was later pronounced deceased."

Police said there were no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing. The deceased was later identified as Ashley Smith, 37, of East Lincoln Avenue in Mt. Vernon, NY. On June 11, police identified Richardson as being a person of interest

in the case, adding she was last seen fleeing the scene on foot northbound on Oakley Street. Richardson is deemed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

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



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- Financiero
- Sexual
- Negligencia

DATOS SOBRE EL ABUSO DE ANCIANOS

- Aproximadamente 1 de cada 10 adultos mayores de 60 años ha experimentado abuso.
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- El impacto del abuso de ancianos lo sienten personas de todas las edades.
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Letters To The Editor

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

Re Larry Penner's Letter re "Inter City Monthly Discount" [Norwood News, June 6, 2024]

Mr. Penner feels many more customers can easily access an express bus versus a Metro-North station. Since Mr. Penner says "Metro-North," one can reasonably infer he is referring to The Bronx. Out of 11 Express Bus lines that run in The Bronx, one only stops in the "South Bronx," the BxM4 that runs along the Grand Concourse. I put South Bronx in quotes because the term geographically means anything south of Pelham Parkway/Fordham Road.

The term also applies to a state of mind evoking images of crime, urban blight, burnt out buildings. The rest of the Express lines are merrily on their way to Manhattan while missing the vast major-

ity of The Bronx. Thus, Larry Penner's statement about the "ease" of accessing an Express Bus in The Bronx is a distortion of the facts. Larry Penner does not live in The Bronx. Larry Penner does not know The Bronx.

I don't have an issue with either circumstance. My issue is that he speaks off the top of his head, as an authority, on things he knows nothing about. If I were to write an opinion piece about Great Neck, I would do research. I was under the impression that no bus stops in the South Bronx. I was wrong. I researched before I wrote this letter. Mr. Penner is entitled to his opinion. He is not entitled to make up his own set of facts.

Nat Weiner
Parkchester

MTA ADA Upgrades

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) just announced that the MTA was one of eight winners to receive funding to help make it easier for people with disabilities and mobility needs to access some of

the nation's oldest and busiest rail transit systems through essential upgrades, such as elevators.

Funding comes from the FTA national competitive discretionary \$343 million "All Stations Accessibility Grant Program." Upgrading these stations will create opportunities for people with disabilities to independently use rail transit systems across the country to access jobs, community services, social activities, and all other destinations most people take for granted.

The MTA will receive funding to improve accessibility at the Wakefield-241st Street, Kingsbridge Road, 167th Street, 145th Street, and 110th Street stations. Modernization work will include installing elevators, updating platforms to reduce gaps, adding tactile platform edge warning strips, making stairway repairs, improving signage, and enhancing visual and audio announcement systems.

I congratulate the hardworking men and women of the MTA, especially those who manage their federal and

state grant programs who, year after year, continue to make all this possible. This includes periodically winning extra federal transit dollars under various national competitive discretionary grant programs.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Editor's Note: The MTA announced on Friday, June 7, that the last minute delay of the implementation of congestion pricing on June 30 may now impact upon the MTA's various capital plans as a result of the drop in revenue expected from the congestion pricing plan reversal, potentially impacting some of these ADA upgrades.

Please send all letters to the editor, along with supporting hyperlinked sources, to norwoodnews@norwoods.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.

By TOM CORSILLO

Have you struggled to get an appointment with your doctor lately for a routine issue? And when you've finally gotten one, did it feel like you got only a few minutes of facetime? If so, you're not alone.

For years, experts have been sounding the alarm about an anticipated doctor shortage that will not only impact New York, but the entire country. Patients are already waiting longer to see their primary care physician, with many struggling to find one in the first place, and this problem will only grow as our population continues to age. While not a silver bullet, new legislation recently signed by New York Gov. Kathy Hochul could lay the foundation for a creative and viable solution that would help to ease this complex health care problem.

Two new regulations give New York pharmacists the ability to dispense an extremely common class of medications, hormonal contraception (birth control), as well as administering long-acting injectable medications that treat mental health and substance abuse disorders. But these are not the only prescription medications that pharmacists are *equipped to dispense*.

Treatments for upper respiratory infections, urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases, eye infections, and HIV are among those pharmacists might administer in the near future un-

Opinion

Pharmacists are Cure to NY's Doctor Shortage

der a "test to treat" model that would enable pharmacists to test patients for common, highly contagious conditions and then dispense the appropriate treatment.

This approach could be a game changer for patients who could access needed medications without scheduling a doctor's appointment. It would free up physicians, allowing them to spend more time with patients and to focus on more complicated conditions.

Consider any of the contagious conditions mentioned above and imagine not having to go to a doctor, wait for test results, then to the pharmacy and wait for medication, all while you're very contagious and potentially putting others at risk: a "one-stop-shop" approach, and it would properly acknowledge the medical expertise that pharmacists have.

Pharmacists complete a rigorous, (at minimum) six-year course of study to obtain a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and must also secure a state-specific license

following a completed internship and state board examinations. They are well-trained health professionals and are the most accessible health care providers, with patients visiting their community pharmacies much more frequently (10 times to 1) than they do their doctors.

Recognizing this expertise would also help community pharmacies continue to serve patients as they navigate the increasingly challenging economics of the pharmacy profession. Specifically, powerful prescription drug middlemen, known as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), use abusive practices which control how much pharmacists are reimbursed for the fulfillment of their prescription medications.

This means community pharmacies today are actually losing money on many prescriptions. Allowing pharmacists to fully use their license would be a lifeline for them, while also providing needed, readily accessible healthcare to the public. It makes so much sense. If

New York were to expand the ability of pharmacists to dispense specific medications, it would not be the first state to do so. States like New Mexico, Oregon, Florida, and North Carolina have given pharmacists the authority to prescribe select medications.

Being able to dispense birth control was a vital first step, but pharmacists are more than just retailers, as they demonstrated throughout the height of the COVID 19 pandemic when they proved their value by testing and immunizing millions of New Yorkers.

New York's 20,000 pharmacists are essential health care providers who could be part of the solution to address the dearth of medical professionals, with many clamoring for the opportunity to take on this expanded role. They've earned that right. It's time New York granted it.

Tom Corsillo is a spokesperson for New York City independent pharmacies.

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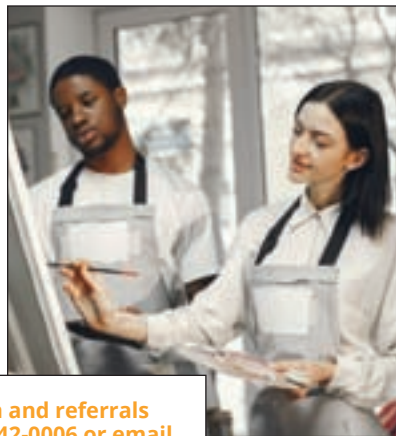
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The Caregivers Program is funded by the U.S. Administration National Family Caregiver Support Program through the New York City Department for the Aging.

Out & About

Compiled by **ARIEL PACHECO & SÍLE MOLONEY**

EVENTS

NYC Parks will host the **Feel Free Art Festival** on Saturday, June 22, at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center at 3225 Reservoir Oval East in Norwood, The Bronx, from noon to 4 p.m. The festival promotes the opportunity for all people to express themselves through arts and culture. For more information, contact Marcus.Riley@parks.nyc.gov or call (718) 543-8672.

The Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District, in conjunction with the Bronx Historical Society and partners, will host the inaugural **Norwood Pride** festival during Pride Month on June 23 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Williamsbridge Oval, located at 3225 Reservoir Oval East, in Norwood, The Bronx. All are welcome.

Bedford Park Congregational Church, 311 E 201st St, The Bronx, NY 10458,

located off Bainbridge Avenue, will be holding a **Lawn Party** on Sunday, June 23, from 1 to 3 p.m. with food, fun, and raffles, in exchange for a requested donation of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

The first-ever **Bronx Pride Pop-Up** will take place on Saturday, June 15, at three separate Bronx locations. The first is at East Fordham Road & East Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10458 from noon to 2 p.m., the second is at Lou Gehrig Plaza at 161st Street and Grandview Place, Bronx, NY 10451 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the third is at 1070 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10459 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. At each pop-up event, there will be music, art, and performances. For more information, call (646) 723-3325.

The Masjidus Saburis Mosque is hosting a **Community Eid Celebration** on Saturday, June 22, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 2975 Bainbridge Avenue, Bronx NY 10458. The community celebration will feature a toy giveaway, face paintings, a grocery bag giveaway, and more. For more information, call or text (347) 289-7991.

Celebrate **Juneteenth** with Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson at

the New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, on Saturday, June 15, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a range of programs and activities. Advanced ticket reservation is required (up to a maximum of 4 per group). For questions, email communityevents@nybg.org. A Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony will also be held at Bronx Borough Hall, 851 Grand Concourse, on Tuesday, June 18, at noon. All are welcome.

MUSIC

Bronx Arts Ensemble and Jenn Jade 5 will host **Summer Sprinklers** at Pelham Bay Park, Middletown Road & Stadium Avenue, Bronx, NY 10465 on Friday, June 14 at 7 p.m. Entry for the event is free and there will be global grooves & international flavors from Jenn Jade 5. For more information, call (718) 601-7399.

Bronx Summer Jam returns for its third annual music celebration featuring a cast of emerging artists and DJs on Sunday, June 30, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 2141 Bronx Park East, Bronx, NY 10462. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bronx-summer-jam-24-tickets-880519326007>.

The Office of the Bronx Borough President & NYC Department of Ageing are hosting the **3rd Annual Gospel Concert for Seniors** on Friday, June 21, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Community Protestant Church, at 1659 East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx. For more information, contact Larcenia Walton at lwalton@bronxbp.nyc.gov.

ARTS

Join the Bronx Historical Society for a **Family Evening** at the Edgar Allen Poe Cottage, located at 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10458, on Friday, June 14, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The evening will feature drumming, health and wellness seminars, belly dancing, and more. For more information, contact education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org.

MOVEMENT

The Office of the Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson will be hosting a **Pride March** at Bronx Borough Hall 851 Grand Concourse on Saturday, June 22, at 11 a.m. The march will begin at Bronx Borough and conclude at 3rd Avenue and 149th Street. For more information, contact webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov

52nd Precinct Hosts 2nd Annual Autism Awareness Walk

(continued from page 7)

cinct to acknowledge us as an entity. Last year, when we did it for the first time, I think the kids felt very special because there's not a lot of events like this for our children, and specifically for them. They have a great time, and we have a hard time getting them back in the building!"

Reflecting on the day, Echevarria concluded, "We have some officers who brought their kids out as well. Everyone is affected by autism in one way or another at different ends of the spectrum and we're looking forward to continue to do this because we know that this is a need in the community."



All Photos by Ariel Pacheco

STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, and police officers attend the 52nd Precinct's Annual Autism Awareness Walk along Webster Avenue in Norwood on May 29, 2024.



STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, and police officers attend the 52nd Precinct's Annual Autism Awareness Walk along Webster Avenue in Norwood on May 29, 2024.



STUDENTS AND TEACHERS line up for snacks and refreshments at the NYPD's 52nd Precinct at 3016 Webster Avenue in Norwood after the Precinct's Annual Autism Awareness Walk on May 29, 2024



STUDENTS POSE FOR a photo with NYPD's McGruff, the crime dog, at the NYPD's 52nd Precinct at 3016 Webster Avenue in Norwood after the Precinct's Annual Autism Awareness Walk on May 29, 2024.

VCJC Votes to Sell Center & Return as Partial Tenants

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

After news broke earlier this year that the Board of Trustees of Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) were in discussions with a developer to sell the building, despite some pushback from the local community, on Sunday, May 19, VCJC members called for a special membership meeting to be held to discuss the situation.

Norwood News had previously spoken to some residents of the area a few months ago, amid rumors of a potential sale, they had said there was definitely some fear and uncertainty about what would become of the various services, including religious services, provided at the center, located at 3880 Sedgwick Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village.

According to its website, VCJC was established in 1927 and for the past 60 years, besides being a house of worship for VCJC's Jewish congregation, has served as an older adult center operated by the nonprofit, JASA, as well as an early childhood education center run by Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC).

Norwood News was not present at the private membership meeting on May 19 and therefore, we are reporting what was communicated to us afterwards by a spokesperson for the VCJC Board of Trustees, based on the board's summary of the discussion at that meeting.

According to the board, the May 19 meeting was called by VCJC member Fis-

chel Baiser, along with nine other VCJC members, in accordance with VCJC's bylaws which allow any ten members to request a meeting. They said its purpose was to present alternative proposals to the board regarding the future of the VCJC building.

According to the VCJC board, Baiser and some other VCJC members opposed the sale of the building and instead of selling it, they proposed some other alternatives during the meeting. Meanwhile, according to the VCJC board, Jack Kleinfeld, representing the Board of Trustees as its chair, presented the board's proposal on the latest status of the negotiated sale, which he said would involve members moving back into part of the building after renovations would be carried out.

According to Kleinfeld, this proposal would ensure the local Jewish congregation's sustainability and the center's continued operation as a place of worship [albeit on a smaller scale].

According to the board, and as previously reported, the building which houses the center was constructed in the mid-1960s and originally served a congregation of 700 members.

"Today, the VCJC has less than 60 members," the board said. "The aging building and significantly reduced membership make it financially challenging to maintain the current facility without facing potential bankruptcy. Several years ago, the membership voted 29 to 5

in favor of selling the building. The circumstances regarding the building's condition and the congregation's size remain unchanged."

According to the board, following Kleinfeld's presentation, the VCJC members opposing the sale then shared their viewpoints on the future of the center with members.

"However, their proposals did not offer immediate, actionable solutions to alleviate the financial strain on the VCJC," the board said. "Some suggestions involved the congregation becoming real estate developers, which is not a practical option. Other proposals included consulting community group specialists and non-profit oriented law firms, avenues the VCJC has already explored."

According to the board, during the meeting, some VCJC members had also expressed dissatisfaction with Innovative Development, the company involved in the sale discussions.

In response to some criticism, the VCJC board of trustees said they explained to members that the board had initially kept details of the sale confidential in order "to maximize the success" of the sale negotiations and plans. They said they had since agreed to discuss the proposed sale details with VCJC members, adding that an agreement on the sale was close to being finalized.

After all the presentations, were made, the board said that Kleinfeld moved for a vote on the following, "I move that the membership of the VCJC endorses the current plans being finalized with Innovative Development Corporation to sell the property and then become tenants in a renovated facility. The membership understands that any final agreements between the parties will require the membership's explicit approval. The membership further directs that actions by members to prevent, sidetrack, or sabotage these plans cease and desist."

According to the board, the motion passed with a vote of 27 to 7. They said that although seven VCJC members left before the roll call vote, their votes opposing the sale plan would not, in any case, have altered the outcome.

"The overwhelming majority of members support the Board of Trustees' diligent efforts to secure a viable future for the congregation by selling the building and relocating to a more manageable facility as tenants with assurances of long term tenancy," the board said.

Norwood News reached out to some residents for comment on the latest vote. There was a suggestion by at least one resident that the vote taken at the meet-



Photo by David Greene

VAN CORTLANDT JEWISH Center, seen on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, has been located at 3880 Sedgwick Avenue in Van Cortlandt Village for the last 60 years. The board of trustees has been in negotiations with a private developer to sell the building for several months, despite some opposition from some members and from some local residents.

ing was not a scheduled vote, and therefore there were doubts that it had "standing." We asked a board representative for comment on the resident's feedback, and he said he didn't know about this question of "standing," but added that his belief was that the board would continue to try to sell the building.

The board representative also said that when the opposing members called for the meeting by way of a formal letter, they had called it to discuss alternatives to the proposed sale. The board representative added that during the meeting, a [separate] vote was proposed [by the opposing members] on a membership-related issue. He said it was explained to the opposing members that because the purpose of the May meeting was solely to discuss the sale of the building, any vote on any other matter unrelated to the sale could not be held.

The board representative said a general membership meeting was due to be held in June at which point any VCJC member could bring up any related topic. He said it was felt that the June meeting would be the more appropriate occasion to have a motion on membership "or anything else." The board representative added that at the May 19 meeting, any motion on alternatives to the sale of the building would have been allowed, in terms of a vote.

He clarified that the May 19 meeting was originally scheduled as an annual membership meeting, but the opposing members later asked for it to be held on the topic of the sale instead. In the meantime, local resident Gary Axelbank has written an op-ed with his thoughts on the situation. This can be read in this week's edition on page 16.

Norwood News has reached out to MMCC for their feedback on the latest proposed sale plans and will share any feedback we receive.

We have also been informed by the VCJC board that further information on the status of the center should be forthcoming this month. We will share any further updates we receive from the board or from other residents on the situation.

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Public and Community Meetings

The next **52nd PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCIL** meeting will take place on Thursday, June 20, at 6 p.m. at Monroe College, FYE Room, 2501 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468. 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, June 25, at 6.30 p.m. at the New York Botanical Garden, Rose Hall Auditorium, 2950 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10458. 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 on Wednesday, June 26, at 7 p.m. at Wave Hill Public Garden & Cultural Center, 675 West 252nd Street, Bronx (Armor Hall entrance at 249th Street and Independent Avenue). 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). For more details, please contact bedfordmosholu@verizon.net. The group is now on summer hiatus until September.

CORRECTION

In the *Norwood News* edition June 6-June 12, 2024, in the story on page 13, entitled “Donald Trump Hosts Rally in Crotona Park,” we reported that Trump invited rappers Sheff G and Sleepy Hollow on stage during the rally at one point, and that both had been charged in Brooklyn in a drug conspiracy case. In fact, the charges were not drug related and according to prosecutors, Sheff G was charged with two counts of attempted murder and two counts of conspiracy (to commit murder and to possess weapons). Sleepy Hollow was charged with two similar conspiracy counts. They are both out on bail and their cases are pending. We apologize for this error.

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MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION, SPONSORED CONTENT

SB Nutrition

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

SB Nutrition opened four years ago to give residents in the local area a healthy food alternative, helping people to focus on their well-being, both mentally and physically. Store owner Asha Mitchell, says the “SB” in SB Nutrition stands for “snatching back” what’s yours, and then thriving.

“I just created SB Nutrition to show other women and men who feel lost in life, or regardless of what they are going through, that it takes consistency and determination and that it is possible, no matter what you go through, to have great health,” said Asha.

Asha found her passion for nutrition through her own personal struggles during the toughest period of her life. She endured a series of incidents which she said led to her dealing with issues like depression, anxiety, and unhealthiness. Soon after, after finding herself through nutrition, Asha opened the family-owned SB Nutrition to help others get through their own struggles.

“I tried to create something where the community can know that they are seen, they are heard, they are valued,

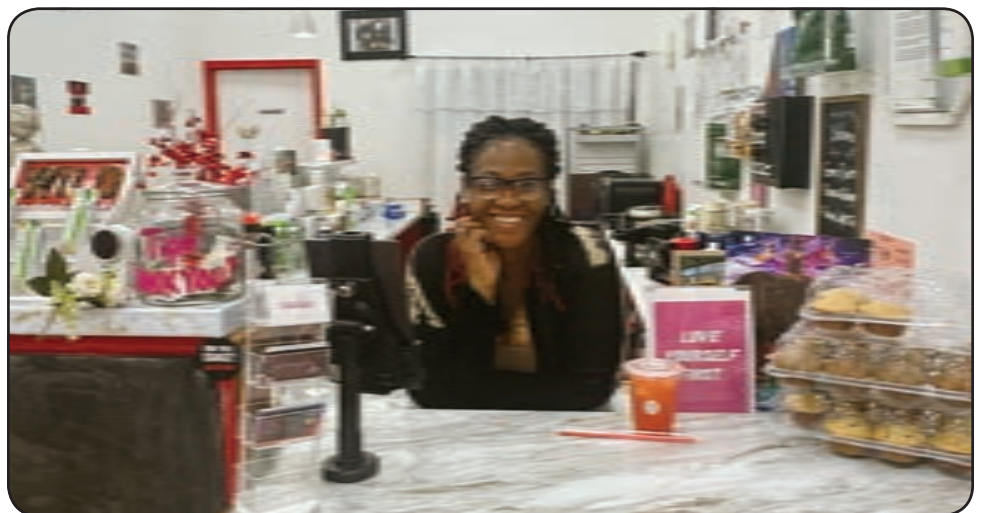
and they are loved,” she said. “I try to connect more on a personal level with everybody that walks through the door because it is also an exchange of energy that goes through every transaction.”

SB Nutrition has products such as iced coffee, tea, shakes, acai bowls, protein donuts, waffles, and more. They are also available for events and bookings. “Everything is created right there in front from scratch which gives us time to talk and build and exchange energy,” Asha said.

Through SB Nutrition, Asha has created a supportive environment where everyone is welcome regardless of where they are on their health journey.

“Healthy is the new gangster, health is a new rising,” Asha said. “Don’t wait until it’s too late; start now. You will walk away feeling a connection because that’s just the energy that I placed into this space.”

SB Nutrition is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is located at 336 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, New York 10467.



All photo by Ariel Pacheco
(TOP) ASHA MITCHELL stands in front of SB Nutrition on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, while holding a shake on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(ABOVE) ASHA MITCHELL poses for a photo at the counter of SB Nutrition on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(LEFT) ASHA MITCHELL poses for a photo inside SB Nutrition on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.



Students Cycle for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Over 120 students attending Allerton's New York Institute for Special Education, took part in the school's annual "Trike-A-Thon" event on May 15 to raise funds for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Manhattan.

The Trike-A-Thon is a school tradition that has been ongoing for 20 years, and school officials said the money raised will be donated to the hospital, which treats children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases.

Irene Fernandez Gomez, the school's

principal said of this year's Trike-A-Thon, "It's a great cause but it's also tapping into what we're trying to teach the students. They've been working hard on developing coordination, motor planning, the ability to be able to pedal, just like their typically developing peers, so we've been working on that all year leading up to this big event."

The children demonstrated both their sensory and motor skills as they raced around the school's hallways located at 985 Astor Avenue, paying attention to stop and go signs along the way.

"All of the kids can participate and many of them are pedaling independently," said Gomez. "Some of them are using a push bar while others that are still learning the skills are using modified bicycles and trikes."

The institute's employees and departments sponsored the preschoolers, kindergarteners, and second graders that crossed the finish line, while being cheered on by spectators waving pom-poms. When the students finished, they were met with medals and honorary licenses for their participation in the event.

participation in the event.

The New York Institute for Special Education, founded in 1831 as The New York Institution for the Blind, is one of the oldest and most respected schools in the nation that provides specialized services for children with disabilities according to school officials.

School representatives also said that the Institute provides quality programs for more than 100 children from The Bronx, ages 3 to 5, who attend its preschool.



All Photos by Ariel Pacheco

STUDENTS AT THE New York Institute for Special Education, located at 985 Astor Avenue in Allerton, celebrate crossing the finish line at the school's annual Trike-A-Thon event on May 15, 2024.



STUDENTS AT THE New York Institute for Special Education, located at 985 Astor Avenue in Allerton, race down the school halls accompanied by teachers on May 15, 2024.



A STUDENT AT the New York Institute for Special Education, located at 985 Astor Avenue in Allerton, crosses the finish line at the school's annual Trike-A-Thon event on May 15, 2024.

By **GARY AXELBANK**

Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) President Stu Harris and Board Chair Jack Kleinfeld have succeeded in boasting about their disinformation and distortion campaign that has resulted in the worst possible real estate deal available, not only for the VCJC congregation, but for the community at large as well.

They claim to have worked tirelessly to keep the terms of their dealings secret, and when details leaked, their concern was not that there could be legitimate criticism to their plans, but wanting to know who leaked the information. That was their priority, not whether they had the best arrangement for the center possible.

What has leaked is that the 33,000 square foot building that has stood as a beacon for almost 60 years in a dense urban community is being sold to a foreign developer called Innovative, with the VCJC congregation to become [partial] tenants and, purportedly, the construc-

Opinion

The VCJC Disinformation and Distortion Campaign

tion of market rate housing with the remaining space.

They have acknowledged that because of VCJC's significantly declining Orthodox membership, that went from 700 in the past to now just under 60, they can no longer afford their property. But as their congregation continues to get older and likely shrinks further, especially since they have rejected new members, including those who have significant roots in their Center, basic logic indicates that so too, will the center's revenue.

In this alignment, there is no guarantee of permanence, as leases do not have to be renewed when Innovative can market the space for more money. VCJC members who have a vote should note that this is the future their leaders have paved for the congregation.

When asked by a prospective developer, Chairman Kleinfeld admitted that a "condo-like" arrangement, where the congregation would own their part of the property, rather than become paying tenants, would be preferred. But when presented with opportunities to pursue that concept, he, with full approval of President Harris, once again, shut the doors and told the world that no other option could be achieved quickly enough.

Impatience, that's their reasoning for making bad choices. Ironically, this is just what Kleinfeld told a nonprofit developer in 2019 when they were negotiating a more favorable deal than the one they're currently getting. That's why that deal fell through. Of course, had

the VCJC signed that agreement at that time, right now they'd be cutting a ribbon for a new place.

VCJC members who will have the opportunity to vote should reject this thoughtless proposal and provide a long-lasting, more sensible arrangement for the VCJC. They should also vote for new leaders who will provide MORE information to them, not less, and not distort the realities of the plans they're making that will affect all of us.

Gary Axelbank is a resident of Van Cortlandt Village.

Editor's Note: Read our latest story on Page 13 on the vote taken by members in May 2024 to sell the VCJC Center and to return as partial tenants.

Editor's Note: Norwood News has reached out to the board for comment on this op-ed. Read our latest story on page 13 on the vote taken by members in May 2024 to sell the VCJC building and return as partial tenants.

BRONX, MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION, SPONSORED CONTENT

Halal Bros Grill

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Halal Bros Grill is a fusion restaurant, bringing together multiple different cultures and recipes to offer a unique menu that has something for everyone. Owner Q has made it a point to try and represent as many different cultures as possible through the food the restaurant serves.

“[We’re] just continuing to work with the community, understanding what they like, what they don’t like, and just keep getting representation on the menu,” Q said. “The Bronx is a place that’s extremely diverse and we just wanted to bring a different feel and different type of energy to The Bronx. We wanted to give customers authentic food made fresh every day but in a fast-food environment in which you can get it quickly.”

Halal Bros Grill has a wide-ranging menu from quesadillas, fresh salads, hot wings, lamb, jerk chicken, and much more. “It’s a restaurant where every person, regardless of their palate, would be able to get something they enjoy,” said Q.

Halal Bros Grill opened in 2022. They’ve sponsored the

food at breast cancer awareness events and other small events locally, making it a point to stay engaged with the community. “We do try to take every opportunity we can to give back and to participate in events and things of that nature,” said Q.

He also takes pride in Halal Bros Grill’s customer service, having been in the service industry for over 20 years. Q is confident in both the quality of the food and the customer service delivered at his restaurant.

“We take pride in providing exceptional customer service and that’s what sets us apart,” said Q. “You don’t know what a customer is going through when they walk through the door. They could be having a terrible day, so it’s our job and our responsibility to make sure that we treat that person like royalty and value them when they come into our store. I think that’s what sets us apart.”

Halal Bros Grill is located at 3476 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467 and is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to midnight.



All Photos by Ariel Pacheco

(ABOVE) HALAL BROS GRILL storefront on Jerome Avenue, The Bronx is seen on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(BELOW LEFT) A FRESHLY MADE serving of food is prepared at Halal Bros Grill on Jerome Avenue, The Bronx on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(BELOW) FOOD IS FRESHLY grilled at Halal Bros Grill on Jerome Avenue, The Bronx, on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Photo by Ariel Pacheco

(BELOW RIGHT) A FRESH SERVING of food is served at Halal Bros Grill on Jerome Avenue, The Bronx on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.



Bronx CB7 Supports Independent Cinema & Halt to Library Cuts

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Bronx Community Board 7 (CB7) held its latest monthly general board meeting on Tuesday, May 28, at Monroe College in Fordham Manor, approving two motions to send letters of support to the Bronx Independent Cinema Center (BICC) and the New York Public Library.

During the meeting, CB7's Parks' committee recommended that the board provide a letter of support to BICC in the context of their application for funding and grant opportunities for their efforts to foster independent cinema in the borough.

BICC launched in October 2022, according to its website. The nonprofit organization currently operates out of CUNY on the Concourse, located at 2501 Grand Concourse also in Fordham Manor, and BICC officials said

the group is looking to bring an independent cinema space to Fordham Road, as previously reported by *Norwood News*.

Currently, The Bronx has only one single movie theater left, the AMC Bay Plaza Cinema 13, located in Co-Op City, since the Concourse Plaza Multiplex Cinema, located on 161st Street, closed down permanently after 30 years on May 28. Representatives for the Concourse Plaza Multiplex said the closure was the result of a "business decision."

Barbara Stronczer, chair of CB7's Parks' committee said "[Gregory Hernandez, executive director of BICC] will also use the funding he receives as a way in which he could help Bronx residents to obtain careers [in independent cinema]. The committee felt that we should send a letter of support

with the hope that they will be able to obtain funding." The board approved the motion.

Yajaira Arias, chairperson of Bronx CB7, said, "It's important that we take on our cultural divisions here in our borough, and in our district, so this motion that we just passed hopefully is the beginning of inviting back the cinema to our district."

The second motion on the agenda came from CB7's Education committee, who recommended the board send a letter of support for the New York Public Library (NYPL) to local elected officials to ask to stop further budget cuts to public libraries.

Leurys Acosta, chair of the Education committee, said, "Jane Addison of the Mosholu Public Library shared their 'Better Writing' campaign to support the New York Public Libraries and protect

them from budget cuts. We have three libraries within our district. These are safe spaces where children and everyone has programming available for free. They're very cherished and valued within our community."

Acosta continued, "So, we're just [hoping to write] a letter of support to the city council and all those who have the power to avoid the cuts and specifically to have our libraries able to stay open on Sundays." The board approved the motion. For more information on various services offered by NYPL at Mosholu Public Library for teens, adults and kids, visit <https://www.nypl.org/locations/mosholu>.

The next General Board Meeting for Bronx CB7 is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, June 25, at 6.30 p.m. at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) located at 2900 Southern Boulevard Bronx, NY 10458.

Bronx Week 2024 Celebrates Best of the Borough

By **SÍLE MOLONEY**

As usual, the 53rd Annual Bronx Week celebrated the best of what the borough has to offer, and took place this year from Monday, May 6, through Sunday, May 19. It featured a host of events honoring seniors, youth, parents, educators, entertainers, small businesses, healthcare professionals, union members, veterans, industry professionals, volunteers and more.

Among the many events that took place was, of course, the obligatory unveiling of the 2024 Bronx Walk of Fame honorees. Others included the Annual Bronx Ball, and the week was capped off with the Annual Bronx Week Parade, Festival and Concert.

Announcing the planned festivities and in reference to those who help "make this borough a great place to live, work, and visit," Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson said, "This is our time to highlight the cultural institutions, neighborhoods, restaurants, and people that help make our borough a premier tourism destination."

On Monday, May 6, Gibson joined Bronx week's main sponsors, the Bronx Tourism Council, the Bronx Economic Development Corporation, Montefiore Einstein, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Cricket Wireless, and the former Whitestone Multiplex Cinemas, to officially kick off Bronx Week 2024 at the newly opened Chase Community Center Branch located at 128 East Fordham Road. There were also a range of other sponsors involved in the celebrations.

There, Gibson announced the 2024 Bronx Walk of Fame honorees: acclaimed actress Andrea Navedo, who starred in "Superfast!," the parody of "The Fast and the Furious" film series (2015), and as Xiomara "Xo" Vilaneuva in the CW comedy-drama series, "Jane the Virgin;" Antwan "Ama-



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 marches in the Bronx Week Parade Finale on Sunday, May 19, 2024, along Mosholu Parkway at Van Cortlandt Avenue East in Bedford Park.

deus" Thompson, a multi-platinum-selling music producer; Ozzie Virgil, Sr., the nation's first MLB player from the Dominican Republic; and the winner of this year's People's Choice Award, Paloma Izquierdo-Hernandez, chief operating officer at Urban Health Plan (UHP).

In addition, receiving the "Key to the Borough" this year was recently retired play-by-play announcer of the New York Yankees of Major League Baseball, John Sterling, who began his career in 1989 and on April 15 this year, retired. From 1989 to 2019, Sterling called over 5,000 consecutive games.

Rob Walsh, president of the Bronx Economic Development Corporation (BXEDC), praised this year's honorees, saying they were not only significant figures in their industries but pillars of The Bronx community. "Their continued involvement with this borough and the influence they have had on those who followed in their footsteps is extraordinary, which is why their names are being added to The Bronx Walk of Fame," he said.

"Our hometown hero, Paloma Izquierdo-Hernandez, is the perfect choice for



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 7 marches in the Bronx Week Parade Finale on Sunday, May 19, 2024, along Mosholu Parkway at Van Cortlandt Avenue East in Bedford Park.

our People's Choice Award because she has had that same effect in the healthcare field." Meanwhile, Melissa Cebolero, senior associate vice president of community relations at Montefiore Einstein, said in part that as a premier academic health system, providing quality, personalized, and accountable care to approximately three million people, Montefiore was immensely proud to call The Bronx its home. "We stand in gratitude to all Bronxites who are part of our pioneering institution," she said.

For her part, Yesenia Quiñones, VP and community manager at Chase's new community center branch on East Fordham Road, said in part that The Bronx was known for its vibrant culture, unmatched diversity, and resilient communities. "I am proud to work every day with the BXEDC and partners across The Bronx to empower our communities and small business owners," she said.

Honoree, Izquierdo-Hernandez, said, "Receiving the first People's Choice Award in Healthcare during Bronx Week is truly an honor." Last year, the People's Choice Award centered on education and was awarded to

Luis Torres, principal of Community School 55, also known as the Benjamin Franklin School.

"Providing health care to The Bronx is a family legacy that I'm proud to continue," Izquierdo-Hernandez said. "I was taught to do the best for the community and to make a difference in people's lives and that is what we do at Urban Health Plan every day. I wouldn't have it any other way."

On Thursday, May 9, Gibson hosted the Annual Bronx Week Labor Breakfast at F&J Pine, located at 1913 Bronxdale Avenue, together with this year's co-sponsor, LiUNA. The annual event celebrates the social and economic achievements of union workers throughout New York City.

This year, the event honored Jeff Crews, IATSE Local 1, Carl Johnson Jr., Plumbers Local Union No. 1, Victor Nieves, Carpenters Union Local 212, Julio Romero, TWU Local 106, and William Woodruff, United Federation of Teachers (UFT). New York State Senator, and chair of the State labor committee, Jessica Ramos, acted as the keynote speaker.

On Friday, May 10, the annual Bankers Breakfast was held at Villa Barone Manor, located at 737 Throggs Neck Expressway. "The Bronx continues to grow and transform because of the continued investment of Bronx stakeholders, financial institutions, and businesses," officials from the Office of the Bronx Borough President wrote. "The Business Initiative Corporation of New York continues to propel small business equity into the Bronx and statewide." The Bankers Breakfast was a ticketed event that honored those who have made and are making The Bronx a place for businesses to thrive, according to the organizers.

Later, on May 10, despite some
(continued on page 21)

Two Plead Guilty in Nicholas Dominici Daycare Case

By SÍLE MOLONEY

Federal prosecutors and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Monday, June 10, that two Bronx men have now pled guilty to various narcotics-related charges resulting in the death of then one-year-old Nicholas Feliz Dominici from fentanyl poisoning, and injury to three other infants at El Divino Niño Daycare Center on Morris Avenue, now closed, located in Kingsbridge Heights on Sept. 15, 2023.

Damian Williams, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Clark announced on Monday that on the morning he was scheduled to begin trial at Manhattan Federal Court, Felix Herrera Garcia, husband of Grei Mendez, the manager of the daycare, who faces separate federal and State charges, pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute narcotics resulting in death and serious bodily injury, as well as possession of narcotics with intent to distribute resulting in death and serious bodily injury.

Prosecutors said the charges were all in connection with the poisoning of the four affected children who were all under the age of three at the time of the incident at the daycare. They said that on May 23, Renny Antonio Parra Paredes had already pled guilty to conspiring to distribute narcotics and had stipulated that his conduct caused death and serious bodily injury, in connection with his role in the poisonings.

Reacting to the two guilty pleas, Williams said the tragedy occurred because, as they admitted in court, Felix Herrera Garcia and Renny Antonio Parra Paredes operated an illegal fentanyl operation out of the center. "We said at the time that this case shocks the conscience of the City, and now Herrera Garcia and Parra Paredes have been brought to justice for this heinous crime."

Meanwhile, Clark confirmed Herrera Garcia pled guilty to the charges causing fatal fentanyl ingestion of then 22-month-old Nicholas and injury to the three other infants. "Herrera Garcia has now been held accountable in the tragic loss of little Nicholas, the seri-



Photo by Síle Moloney

FELIX HERRERA GARCIA, the husband of the operator of Divino Niño Daycare Center based in Kingsbridge Heights, The Bronx, where one-year-old Nicholas Dominici was fatally poisoned on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023, is led out of court at the Bronx Hall of Justice on Thursday, Oct. 5, 2023.



Photo by Síle Moloney

(L TO R) OTONIEL FELIZ SAMBOY, the father of one-year-old Nicholas Feliz Dominici, who was fatally poisoned on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023 at Divino Niño Daycare Center in Kingsbridge Heights, The Bronx, and his wife, Zoila Dominici, Nicholas's mother, comfort each other during a press conference on Thursday, Oct. 5, 2023 at the Office of the Bronx District Attorney, after it was announced that various State charges have been brought against Felix Herrero Garcia, husband of Grei Mendez, the operator of the daycare center, Mendez herself, and Carlisto Acevedo Brito, the cousin of Herrera Garcia.



Photo by Síle Moloney

STATE SEN. GUSTAVO Rivera (S.D. 33), Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14), Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, and childcare advocates join the parents of Otoniel Feliz Samboy and Zoila Dominici, the parents of the late Nicholas Feliz Dominici, 1, to address the press on Fordham Road and Grand Concourse on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, and to announce the introduction of a series of bills in the New York State Legislature and the New York City Council to protect children from opioid exposure in childcare facilities.

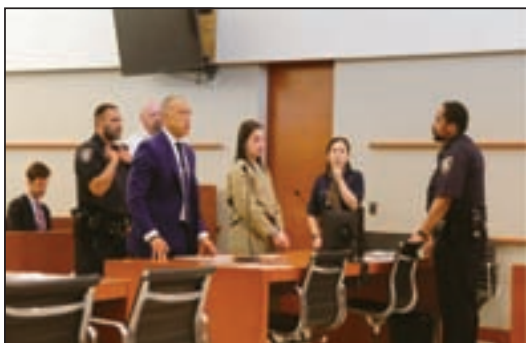


Photo by Síle Moloney

GREI MENDEZ, OPERATOR of the now closed Divino Niño Daycare Center, located on 2707 Morris Avenue in Kingsbridge Heights, where one-year-old Nicholas Feliz Dominici was fatally poisoned on Sept. 15, 2023, appears in Bronx Criminal Court on April 9, 2024.

ous injury of Abel, and the harm to Kiara and Jaziel," she said.

As reported, Herrera Garcia had been intercepted by authorities in Mexico having allegedly fled the U.S. after the daycare center was raided in September 2023.

As alleged in the public filings, from at least in or about October 2022, through at least in or about September 2023, Herrera Garcia, 35, Parra Paredes, 38, and others [including Mendez, 36, and Carlisto Acevedo Brito, 41] conspired

to distribute fentanyl, para-fluorofentanyl, and heroin, including at the daycare.

There, according to court filings, Herrera Garcia, Parra Paredes, and their co-conspirators maintained large quantities of fentanyl, including more than 10 kilograms of narcotics hidden inside secret compartments, or traps, located beneath the floor of the Daycare's playroom, as previously reported.

As alleged, as a consequence of the drug conspiracy perpetrated by Herrera Garcia, Parra Paredes and their co-conspirators, on or about September 15, 2023, four children at the daycare, who were all under three years of age, experienced the effects of poisoning from exposure to fentanyl. Three of the children were hospitalized. The fourth,

Nicholas, just under two years-of-age, died.

Herrera Garcia pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute narcotics resulting in death and serious bodily injury, one count of possession with intent to distribute narcotics resulting in death, and one count of possession with intent to distribute narcotics resulting in serious bodily injury. All three counts carry a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Parra Paredes had pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute narcotics resulting in death and serious bodily injury, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison. The statutory minimum and maximum sentences are prescribed by Congress and are provided for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the judge. The defendants also face separate State charges in Bronx County.

As reported, in December 2023, State Sen. Gustavo Rivera (S.D. 33), Councilmember Pierina Sanchez (C.D. 14), Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, and childcare advocates joined Otoniel Feliz Samboy and Zoila Dominici, parents of Nicholas, to announce the introduction of a series of bills in the New York State Legislature and the New York City Council to protect children from opioid exposure in childcare facilities.

Williams praised what he described as the outstanding investigative work of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the NYPD, the Southern District of New York digital forensic unit, the complex analytical and social media enhancement team at the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, New York Strike Force, and the United States Marshals Service.

He also thanked a range of State, national, and international law enforcement agencies spanning several jurisdictions from New Jersey to Texas, and from California to Mexico and Pennsylvania. The case is being prosecuted by the Office's Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brandon C. Thompson, Maggie Lynaugh, and Justin V. Rodriguez, as well as Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karl P. Miller of the Office of the Bronx County District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, are leading the prosecution.

The cases against Mendez and Acevedo Brito are pending. They are presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) provides training and regularly updated information on how to obtain and administer naloxone (Narcan). Visit <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/naloxone.page> for more information.

Upcoming Voter Registration & Election Deadlines

The primary elections for Congress, State, and Party Positions will be held on June 25. Early voting starts Saturday, June 15, and lasts until Sunday, June 23. The last day to register to vote is June 15 in the local primary.

Early Detection of Illnesses to Coincide with Father's Day

NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln, located at Medicine Pavilion, Lincoln Medical Center, 234 E 149th Street in the Bronx, is hosting an event to coincide with Fathers' Day on Saturday, June 15, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. to encourage men to get tested for early prevention of colon and prostate cancer, and other illnesses. Testing is free for those 40 years of age and older who do not have health insur-

ance.

Town Hall Meeting to Discuss Community Concerns

Share your concerns about your local neighborhood with local elected officials, City Council Member Eric Dinowitz (C.D. 11) and Assemblyman John Zaccaro Jr. (A.D. 80), as well as city agencies and community organizations at a Town Hall meeting at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3325 Reservoir Oval West in Norwood, The Bronx, on Thursday, June 30, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. To RSVP, contact mpc-bronx@gmail.com.

Government and Election Reform Forum and Public Input Session

The public is invited to testify about any matter of importance to City govern-

ment and to suggest changes to the New York City Charter, which provides the structure of City government and key powers of City elected officials and agencies. The Bronx public session will take place at NYC Health +Hospitals/Lincoln, located at 234 East 149th Street, Bronx, NY 10451, on Monday, June 17, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The public can also join via Zoom by visiting www.nyc.gov/charter, where more information is available on how to connect.

Enrollment Closing Soon for Summer Youth Program at Sixth Street

Enrollment for Sixth Street Community Center's summer youth program will be closing shortly once the cap is reached. Registration is on a first come first served basis until full, for children ages 5-11. Send in an application now to reserve your child's spot to youth@sixthstreetcenter.org. For more details about the youth summer program, including what the workshops entail and what to bring, view the flier here: <https://sixthstreetcenter.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=4888547abcb912464742bc024&id=cd3f7022cb&e=fd76d4c24>.

Americorps 2024-2025 Application Recruitment Period Ending Soon

NYC Service is accepting applications for its 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Service year. The 4 AmeriCorps programs provide workforce development skills and pathways to public service careers, address pressing city issues, and help develop civic leaders. Applications are set to close on June 24. To register for an info session and apply visit nyc.gov/servenyc.

Affordable Housing Fair

Bronx Neighborhood Housing Service is hosting an affordable housing fair on Saturday, July 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1451 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, NY 10469. Admission is free. For more information call (718) 881-1180.

Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has opened affordable housing lotteries for housing units at various locations. For more information visit <https://housing-connect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/search-lotteries>.

MMR Vaccine for Children

NYC Department of Health are reminding New Yorkers to have their children receive the MMR vaccine before traveling this summer. They said decreases in measles vaccination rates around the world have led to outbreaks, increasing the chances of unvaccinated travelers from the U.S. getting sick and spreading the virus when they get back home. They said the MMR vaccine is safe, provides 97% protection against measles after two doses, and said to talk to your child's health care provider before traveling.

Stand Up to Violence (SUV) Annual Peace Walk

In recognition of Gun Violence Awareness Month, rain or shine, NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi + North Central Bronx will join cure violence interrupters, Stand Up to Violence, for the SUV Annual Peace Walk on Thursday, June 13, at 5:30 p.m. at the corner of Astor and Wallace Avenues, Bronx. The group will walk to East 229th Street and White Plains Road. For more information and to register for a free shirt, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/suv-peacewalk-tickets-908259357187>.

No Parking on West Burnside Avenue

NYC Department of Design & Construction announced that there will be no parking temporarily on West Burnside Avenue between Loring Place and Osbourne Place (south side) until June 29 (24/7). Similarly, there will be no parking on West Burnside Avenue 150 feet between Phelan and Loring Place (south), 50 feet on each side of the intersections of West Burnside Avenue, Hennessy, and Phelan Place until June 29 (24/7). Neither will there be parking temporarily on Phelan Place between Billingsea Terrace and West Burnside Avenue until June 29 (24/7).

New Map of Public Bathrooms

New York City recently launched a google maps layer showing all public bathrooms across the five boroughs, in parks, libraries, transit hubs etc. You can view the map here: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?hl=en&mid=15bUbaKsobajdGL6HLLmUpmBuZ6ILtVQ&ll=40.862299492748846%2C-73.87441520074785&z=14>.

Participatory Budgeting Voting is Open

All New Yorkers, 11 years and older, regardless of citizenship status, are eligible to vote on which City projects should benefit from \$870,000 of participatory budgeting funding. Each person gets one vote only but can vote on as many projects as they like. Only the top 5 projects will get funded, and voting lasts until Wednesday, June 12. To view and vote on potential projects, visit nyc.gov/pb and use code "BXC.B7." For more information, contact Karla Cabrera Carrera at kcabrera@cb.nyc.gov or (929) 496-0748.

Careers Fair

NYC Department of Youth & Community Development and community partners are hosting a free, 6-week, Summer Leadership Fair and Girl Empowerment Program from July 8 to August 15, Mondays to Thursday, from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. for girls aged 7 to 13. Orientation is June 22 at 10 a.m. For more information, contact Pamela at pamela@NOMWI.org or call (347) 275 3400.

Norwood: Brooklyn Man Fatally Stabbed in Oval Identified

By SÍLE MOLONEY

The 66-year-old man who was found deceased in Norwood with a knife wound to the neck on Sunday has been identified as José Cruz of 3rd Avenue in Brooklyn, police said. The NYPD said that on Sunday, June 9, at around 5.25 a.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding an aided man inside the Williamsbridge Oval [in front of the entrance to the park at 3400 Reservoir Oval East].

"The 66-year-old male aided was discovered unconscious and unresponsive with multiple puncture wounds to the body while on a park bench in the vicinity of Putnam Place and Reservoir Oval East," police said. "EMS transported the male to NYC Health and Hospitals/Jacobi where he was pronounced deceased. There are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing."

The area had been cordoned off by police on Sunday while the Crime

Scene Unit carried out an investigation. However, police said the incident has not [for the time being] been classified a homicide.

Norwood News spoke to one male resident on Sunday, who we are not naming for security reasons, who said he believed he knew the victim based on a photo he said he was shown by police, and that he had been in his company, along with others, at the location the previous evening. However, the name he gave for the person he knew was not the name later released by police for the victim.

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



Photo by Síle Moloney

AN NYPD CRIME scene unit is seen in front of the entrance to the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood after a 66-year-old man was found deceased with multiple stab wounds about the body in the early hours of Sunday, June 9, 2024.

Bronx Week 2024 Celebrates Best of the Borough

(continued from page 18)

gloomy weather, the Bronx Week Silent Disco was held outdoors at the Loreto Playground, located at 1111 Van Nest Avenue, billed as a free, family-friendly, fun event. With wireless headphones, attendees jammed out to music of their choosing and created their own dance parties.

On Saturday, May 11, the Annual Health Day event was held at the Northeast Bronx YMCA, located at 1250 East 229th Street. The theme for the event was "Empowering Women is Empowering Health!" Officials from the Office of the Bronx Borough President said, "In the Bronx, there are factors influencing the significant racial disparities and a lack of awareness of women's health issues."

As part of the Health Day event, there was a Community Baby Shower, hosted by the NYPD "to celebrate and empower women in the gym," as well as outdoor events in the courtyard and parking lot. There were also health screenings,

workshops, and lots of giveaways.

On Monday, May 13, the borough president and her Veterans Advisory Council co-hosted the Annual Bronx Veterans Appreciation Day Luncheon, a heartfelt tribute to the men and women who serve in the armed forces and live in The Bronx. The event was held at Eastwood Manor, located at 3371 Eastchester Road, and all past and current service members were invited to attend.

This year's keynote speaker was New York City Civil Court Judge of Bronx County, Yadira Gonzalez-Taylor, who served in the United States Army from 1992 to 1998. This year's honorees were Linda D. Catlett, notary public and notary signing agent (NSA) at Bronx Community College, and retired U.S. Navy veteran, Cornell Nolton, vice chairman of the BLISS, Inc. board of directors, sergeant-at-arms at BCHS Mental Health Board, and a retired Vietnam War veteran, and Juan Parra, chairperson of the veteran's committee at a Bronx Community Board, and a retired Marine Corp veteran.

They also included Joseph Mondello, a member of Bronx Community Board 10, district commander of the American Legion, former chairperson of the Bronx borough president's veterans advisory council, and a retired U.S. Air Force veteran, SFC Ricardo Garcia, veterans coordinator at the Hostos Office of Veterans Affairs (HOVA at Hostos Community College, and a retired U.S. Army National Guard veteran, and Tiana Sloan, coordinator for military and veteran services at the University of Mount St. Vincent, chair of the James J. Peters VA Medical Center's volunteer student veterans coalition; and president of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 979.

On Thursday, May 16, the BX Factor & What's Up in The Bronx event took



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

CHEERLEADERS PERFORM DURING the Bronx Week Parade Finale on Sunday, May 19, 2024, on Mosholu Parkway and Van Cortlandt Avenue East in Bedford Park.



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

THE 40+ DOUBLE DUTCH Club, who displayed their names and ages on the backs of their t-shirts, jumped rope and performed using hula hoops, as they marched in the Bronx Week Parade Finale on Sunday, May 19, 2024, along Mosholu Parkway and Van Cortlandt Avenue East in Bedford Park.

place at Yankee Stadium. BX Factor is a competition hosted by the Bronx Economic Development Corporation. Five local Bronx business owners were invited to present their ideas on how to improve their business to a panel of judges, with a chance to win a \$10,000 cash prize to put toward that idea.

Gomez Design Studio, a company that collects, sorts, and prepares discarded construction waste for use in its own line of sustainable products, won the competition, which was sponsored by Santander Bank and the New York Yankees.

Also, on May 16, the borough's seniors were invited to the annual Centenarian Event, held at Villa Barone Manor, located at 737 Throggs Neck Expressway. The event also acknowledged the hard work and dedication of local nursing homes and older adult centers that provide care to Bronx seniors. The event was free for each centenarian and one guest.

On Saturday, May 18, the induction ceremony was held for this year's Bronx Walk of Fame honorees at the Veteran's Memorial Rotunda at Bronx Borough Hall, located at 851

Grand Concourse. Later on May 18, the Bronx Ball was held at the former Whitestone Multiplex Cinema, located at 2505 Bruckner Boulevard. Journalist Lynda Lopez, sister to singer, actress, businesswoman and philanthropist, Jennifer Lopez, was the MC for the black-tie event, which included food, dancing, music, and art.

The Bronx Week Parade and Festival returned to Mosholu Parkway and Hull Avenue in Bedford Park on Sunday, May 19, having been held along the Grand Concourse last year. Bronx Pride was on display as celebrities, marching bands, community organizations, schools, sports teams, and civic groups marched along Mosholu Parkway, highlighting the best of the borough. Participants included Bronx Community businesses, political leaders, schools, and institutions.

It was followed by the Bronx Week Concert, which featured DJ Ralphy Mercado, Tano, two-time Latin Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter, Luis Figueroa, singer, songwriter, television and radio personality, Lil' Mo, Free-style sensation, Lisette Melendez, and International Women in Reggae.



Collaborating with the Community on Health & Wellness

By **CARLOS TEJADA**

On a typical month, I get to connect with hundreds of people at churches, community centers, colleges, shelters and more as a community health specialist in Montefiore Hospital's Office of Community and Population Health. One person I met at a recent community education event is Matt, who oversees events on a variety of topics of interest for participants at Older Adult Centers.

Each month, I host an in-person or virtual presentation on health topics like diabetes, hypertension, sleep, stress in older age, or nutrition at one of the centers in The Bronx or Upper Manhattan.

Several months ago, I gave a presentation on metabolic syndrome, a cluster of conditions that raises your risk of heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes. It was not a condition that was familiar to Matt, but he listened because he had one of the risk factors associated with the condition: older age. His doctor hadn't mentioned metabolic syndrome before.

My presentation covered the health risks of excess body fat, limited physical movement, and a diet high in salt, fat, and sugar and low in fiber, vitamins and nutrients. Matt definitely took notice. He began to learn about calorie consumption and started intermittent fasting, a pattern of eating that has become popular in recent years. A popular method of intermittent fasting is the

non-consumption (fasting) of any calories for 16 hours of the 24-hour day, and only consuming calories during one specific 8-hour period during this same 24-hour-day.

Since starting intermittent fasting, Matt has lost 10 pounds. He feels better and his blood pressure has gone down. Here is how an 8-hour eating period could look for Matt:

He wakes up and eats no food. He drinks beverages with no calories (water, seltzer, black coffee, tea, or drinks with zero calorie sweeteners like Sucralose, Stevia, or Monkfruit.)

At noon, Matt has lunch and might have a beverage with calories, or a snack or two.

From 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., Matt has dinner and might have a beverage with calories or a snack/dessert.

At 8 p.m., Matt stops eating. He can still have beverages with no calories.

Matt goes to sleep and repeats the pattern again when he wakes up.

During his eating period, Matt often eats foods that are high in protein, fiber, and nutrients like vitamins and minerals. These include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and lean meats. Matt is eager to continue his health journey. He has also heard the same from many of his senior center participants.

If you're interested in trying intermittent fasting, speak with your healthcare provider first to assess if it is a safe practice for you. To request the holding of a workshop on health in your community, contact me at ctejada@montefiore.org. To obtain care for metabolic syndrome, weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, call (800) 636-6683 or visit <https://www.montefiore.org/general-internal-medicine>.

Carlos Tejada is a community health specialist in Montefiore Hospital's Office of Community and Population Health.

BRONX, MOSHOLU PRESERVATION CORPORATION, SPONSORED CONTENT

Craft Empanadas

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Craft Empanadas has been a staple in Norwood since its inception in 2015, serving the community over 200 flavors of empanadas. Founded by Ricky and Shary Rodriguez, Craft Empanadas has been a tool through which they have been able to give back to the community.

Not only does Ricky own Craft Empanadas on East Gun Hill Road in Norwood, but he also grew up in the neighborhood. Ricky has been in the food business since he was a student at Clarkson University in 2004, when he was making and selling empanadas from his dorm room.

“One of the things that separates us is that we make everything fresh,” Ricky said. “We also strive for customer satisfaction in every aspect of the word.” He said his favorite part of running Craft Empanadas is interacting with the community.

Craft Empanadas also works with NYC Department of Education and with the local P.S. 94 Kings College School in Norwood. “The neighborhood is growing,” said Ricky. “People are looking for spots and places they can go and be in a



family-oriented atmosphere. I think we tend to offer that to the community.”

Shary and Ricky’s impact on the Norwood community goes back even further than Craft Empanadas. They have been business owners on East

Gun Hill Road since 2008 when they opened Shary’s Daycare. They also regularly donate food and supplies to those in need.

“The neighborhood has been good to us; that’s why we give back,” said Ricky. “We put



on certain events for the community as far as the children are concerned.”

Craft Empanadas originally began as a juice bar, before slowly becoming what it is today. Ricky said there’s something on the menu for everyone, as it ranges from chicharron de pollo, to tacos, to oxtails. Craft Empanadas also does outside catering.

Craft Empanadas was founded with the goal of bringing something new to the com-

munity by bringing a modern take on traditional Latin food like empanadas.

“Our goal is to serve the community and the whole Bronx in an intimate setting,” Ricky said. “We want to see a small business thrive and expand, especially in a tough market.”

Craft Empanadas is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and is located at 261 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, NY 10467.

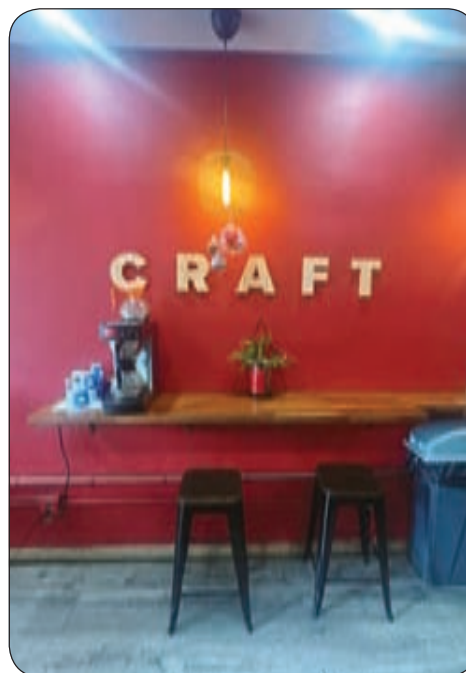
All photos by Ariel Pacheco

(TOP LEFT) THE CRAFT EMPANADAS storefront on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, is seen on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(TOP RIGHT) AN EAST GUN Hill Road mural is seen inside Craft Empanadas, located on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(FAR LEFT) THE FRONT COUNTER of Craft Empanadas, located on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, is seen on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

(LEFT) THE INTERIOR OF Craft Empanadas, located on East Gun Hill Road, The Bronx, is seen on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.



Prosecutors Hold Gun Violence Summit

(continued from page 1)

The agenda included lectures with an open forum, break-out group sessions to allow prosecutors to discuss issues more freely among themselves, testimonials and such from victims, family members, and survivors of gun violence, as well as a trip to the Bronx Zoo, located near to Fordham University.

PAGV was created in 2014, citing the need to end gun violence in all forms, from suicide to mass shootings, to daily care and use of firearms. According to its website, “[PAGV] is a non-partisan group of leading prosecutors focusing on gun violence prevention strategies, ranging from policy advocacy to improved enforcement of existing laws. In so doing, PAGV will seek as much common ground as possible among the many voices on this pressing national issue.”

Clark kicked off proceedings, together with the MC, thanking everyone for attending and noting her pleasure that the annual summit was being held for the first time in The Bronx. She noted the important work PAGV and APA had done over the last year to combat gun violence, adding that the work was not finished. “We have to continue to do the work that we do to make sure that we keep our community safe,” she said in part. “We care deeply enough to come from all points of our regions to share best practices and help each other overcome the challenges that we face each and every day.”

New York City Mayor Eric Adams was a welcome guest at the event which, according to Clark, came as a surprise to the participants. The mayor spoke on some gun violence cases he, himself, knew of from having visited and talked with the impacted victims or their families. He referenced one little girl who found police officers making a report in her home on a school day because someone had shot a bullet through her window, and of how nonplussed she had been about the experience. “She normalized gun violence,” Adams said.

Adams also spoke of another victim, now two-year-old Catherine, who, as reported by *Norwood News*, was shot in the

face in early 2022 in Bedford Park at 11 months of age, and how traumatized her mother had been over the incident. Adams went on to say that the victims were not the only ones traumatized, acknowledging that prosecutors, themselves, are also traumatized [due to the sheer volume and often violent nature of the shootings].

“We may think we’re just going through the motions of the case, and we need to do it now... You may think we close the file, get a verdict, go home, but no, we need both sides of the argument,” he said. “This fight is not over yet. Everyone, we have to save the lives of those who have been trapped for a number of years. We have to advocate together. We have to go to D.C. together. We have to mobilize together. We are all on the same team.”

As Adams made a quick exit after his remarks, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson joined the prosecutors on stage. The importance of her presence was noted, given the high rates of gun violence in the borough.

As of May 12, the latest available data for The Bronx showed that year-to-date shooting incidents were up 11.2% with 99 shooting incidents recorded as of May 12, versus 89 at the same time last year. Meanwhile, the number of shooting victims was also up by 9.8% with 123 victims recorded, versus 112 at the same time last year.

Meanwhile, during the 28-day period ending May 12, the number of shooting victims was also up by 63.2 percent (31 versus 19 during the same period last year), and during the same 28-day period, the number of shooting incidents was also up by 50% with 24 incidents recorded during that 28-day period versus 16 during the same timeframe in 2023.

Gibson spoke at length about the need for greater safety in the community and

for each individual, highlighting that gun violence is a national crisis recognized by a wide variety of individuals, from scholars to lawyers, from all around the country. The borough president emphasized the pertinence of addressing the socio-economic status of the communities mostly impacted by gun violence, which she said Clark

Patrol Borough: Bronx		Precinct: All					
CompStat Book							
Week of 05/06/24 - 05/12/24							
		28 Day		Year to Date			
	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	-40.0 %	12	9	33.3 %	36	44	-18.2 %
Rape	33.3 %	27	45	-40.0 %	149	155	-3.9 %
Robbery	18.8 %	383	326	17.5 %	1,727	1,545	11.8 %
Felony Assault	-7.1 %	618	628	-1.6 %	2,731	2,706	0.9 %
Burglary	17.8 %	200	236	-15.3 %	1,016	1,118	-8.1 %
Grand Larceny	39.5 %	656	609	7.7 %	3,160	2,740	15.3 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-39.5 %	321	462	-30.5 %	1,427	1,954	-27.0 %
Total	2.3 %	2,217	2,315	-4.2 %	10,246	10,262	-0.2 %
Patrol	6.6 %	2,070	2,150	-3.7 %	9,518	9,512	0.1 %
Transit	-57.1 %	25	25	0.0 %	132	104	26.9 %
Housing	-44.4 %	122	140	-12.9 %	506	646	-7.7 %
Shooting Victims	28.6 %	31	19	63.2 %	123	112	9.8 %
Shooting Incidents	33.3 %	24	16	50.0 %	99	89	11.2 %
UCR Rape*	-8.3 %	49	75	-34.7 %	245	258	-5.0 %

Source: NYPD courtesy of Compstat

LEFT TO RIGHT show the data and trends of shooting incidents and shooting victims in The Bronx for the 28-day period ending May 12, 2024, as well as the year-to-date statistics as of May 12, 2024, for both shooting incidents and shooting victims in The Bronx, compared to the same date in 2023.

has reportedly been working to address.

Clark annually holds child safety fairs, events highlighting domestic violence, job fairs to help the formerly incarcerated reenter society and other annual commemorative events to help survivors of gun violence heal or process their pain.

“When it comes to poverty and underemployment, when it comes to so many families that are struggling for basic necessities like access to food, and affordable and stable and quality housing, all of that is relative to the conversation around addressing gun violence, Gibson said. “And I know that all of you understand that, because in your own work, you see the many clients and cases that you have known, and the families that come to you that are often feeling the same [impact] of those socio-economic issues.”

Gibson went on to say that the solution to gun violence was not a “one size fits all,” but should be cultivated by addressing the plethora of contributing issues, including socio economic ones. The borough president cited the need for more programs like the Beacon program, as well as job opportunities for youth.

“We want summer youth jobs. We want after school programs. We want evening programs. We want summer camps. We know that these are the answers when it comes to addressing gun

violence. If we give young adults a job, we can transform their lives. We can set them up for success and give them possibilities that are positive,” she said. Gibson also talked about how her team was working with New York City Council and the mayor to pass a City budget which would support such initiatives.

“The one message I have for all of us is that we all want the same things,” Gibson said. “We want our residents and families to be safe. We want our elders and our older adults that are walking down the street to be safe. We want people to know that they have a fundamental right to be safe in their communities and in their neighborhoods.”

Gibson continued, “So, today’s conference is an opportunity to gather with those who are most affected by the violence. I often say the people who are closest to the challenges are closest to the solutions. Hear from the families who are impacted by our work every day. Hear their stories and their testimonials and let us use that as a catalyst for change.”

Later, Klein and Dave LaBahn, president and CEO of APA, followed up with their remarks before the opening of the summit concluded. Both cited the hard work and dedication, even outside of prosecution, that it takes to not only prevent and minimize gun violence, but to help restore the communities most affected by it.



Photo by Emily Sawaked

PROSECUTORS FROM AROUND the country gather at Fordham University in Fordham Manor, The Bronx and listen to Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson’s remarks at the PAGV summit held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

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