



NORWOOD NEWS

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BEDFORD PARK GETS A CLEAN UP



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

VOLUNTEERS, YOUNG AND old, gather to pick up garbage across the street from Harris Field on Paul Avenue by Bedford Park Boulevard in Bedford Park as part of The Bronx Summer Clean-up Series hosted by the Sanitation Foundation, the nonprofit arm of NYC Department of Sanitation on Friday July 19 2024.

By EMILY SAWAKED

For the fourth year in a row, the Sanitation Foundation, the official nonprofit partner of NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY), in conjunction with the New York Yankees and the Office of the Bronx Borough President,

is hosting its annual Bronx Summer Clean-up series.

To incentivize volunteers to clean up their local neighborhoods, a top prize at each event for those who collect the most pounds of trash is a VIP experience at Yankee Stadium. Other

prizes for clean-up efforts include general admission tickets to Yankees games.

This year's clean-up in Bedford Park, held on July 19, was a lively affair. Eagle-eyed volunteers seemed committed to the task as they prowled around

Harris Field equipped with pick sticks, green trash bags, and gloves courtesy of the Sanitation Foundation, scouring the area for unsightly trash.

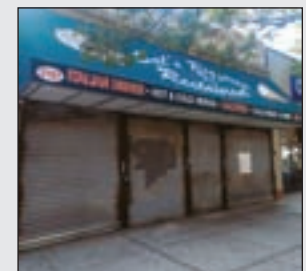
Filled trash bags were later disposed on street corners to be
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Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC)

3400 Reservoir Oval East

Bronx, New York 10467

Phone: 718 324 4998

Fax: 718 324 2917

E-mail: norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org

Web.: www.norwoodnews.org

Publisher

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Editor-In-Chief, Norwood News

Sile Moloney

smoloney@norwoodnews.org

Reporter

Ariel Pacheco

Intern

Ashley Castillo

Regular Contributors

David Greene, Miriam Quiñones

Contributors

Regina Martinez-Estela, Angela Hanson,

Sherica Daley

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Will Immigration Determine the Election Outcome?

By **SHERICA DALEY**

"I will not demonize immigrants!" said U.S. President Joe Biden as part of his March 8th State of the Union speech during which he addressed the global migrant crisis, exacerbated by both the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East. Biden made immigration one of the central issues of his presidential re-election campaign as had his opponent, former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Now that Biden has dropped out of the race and has endorsed U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris for the presidency, it remains to be seen how her campaign will tackle this seemingly no-win political assignment.

During an influx of unaccompanied migrant children along the southern border, in June 2021, Biden tasked his vice president with overseeing diplomatic efforts in Central America to discourage illegal border crossings. On a trip to Guatemala that year, she famously delivered the message, both for the safety of those attempting to travel and in efforts to ease the management of the border crisis, "Do not come. Do not come."

CNN recently reported that Harris and her campaign team have since sought to make one thing clear: she was never charged with managing the southern border. Her team said while Harris focused on long-term fixes, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security remained responsible for overseeing border security. Nonetheless, Republicans are sure to use immigration as form of attack now that she has joined the presidential race.

Meanwhile, during a speech in April, in Grand Rapids, Michigan about the U.S.-Mexico border, Trump, who recently survived an assassination attempt, used the term "animals" to describe migrants illegally crossing the border, after referencing a nursing student from Georgia who was reportedly killed by an undocumented person.

"They're not humans, they're animals, and that's what they are," he said. Trump has long opposed the latest rise in undocumented immigration to the U.S., which he blames Democrats for,



Photo by Sile Moloney

POLICE SAID THIS Hull Avenue home was the subject of a raid by police on Wednesday, March 27, 2024, which resulted in the arrest of eight people on various charges including criminal weapons and drug possession.

and which has resulted in immigrants who have crossed the southern border illegally being sometimes bused to so-called "sanctuary cities" across the U.S., including New York.

"They're sending prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients and terrorists, the worst they have in every country, all over the world," Trump alleged, later adding, "They're wrecking our country."

However, crossing the U.S. border and applying for asylum is a legal way

to enter the country for people fleeing dangerous situations in their own home countries, according to a January report from the NYC Comptroller's Office. The report also busts many other ill-conceived myths about immigrants. For example, it explains how they benefit the economy, irrespective of their status. The report can be read in full at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/facts-not-fear-how-welcoming-immigrants-benefits-new-york-city/>.

In October 2023, NY1 reported that New York City Mayor Eric Adams placed a stay-limit on all New York City shelters of 60 days to deal with shelter overcrowding. This came after other states began moving migrants to New York. The mayor's office released a statement at the time which read, "It is the mayor's latest attempt to provide relief to the city's shelter system and finances, as it grapples with more than 120,000 migrants who have come to New York."

The rule meant that once undocumented migrants got their 30-day notice from their assigned caseworker, they were later transferred to the next available shelter with space. Since March 2024, some displaced migrants have been forced to sleep upright on the streets in chairs, on sidewalks, or in local train stations, while they wait for

(continued on page 13)

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BRONX, JEROME GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (JGHBID), SPONSORED CONTENT

Perfect Pose Hair Designs



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

PERFECT POSE HAIR Designs storefront is seen in the photo above on Friday, July 12, 2024.

THE INTERIOR OF Perfect Pose Hair Designs is seen both photos on the left before it opens on Friday, July 12, 2024.



By ARIEL PACHECO

Perfect Pose Hair Designs has been a staple of the Norwood community for over 25 years. Opened in 1996 by store owner Dawn, Perfect Pose has been helping the community look their best since its inception.

Dawn says she has had a passion for hair since she was a kid, and with practice and schooling, has honed her craft throughout her life. "I've always liked doing hair since I was a child," she said. "Before I had my own business, I used to rent chairs."

Perfect Pose provides a multitude of services that includes basic hair care, styling, weaves, braids, locks, relaxers, treatments, wedding styles, and dry curls, among others. Most of Dawn's customers are walk-ins but appointments can be made

as well.

Perfect Pose has become more than just a typical salon.

Through excellent customer service, Dawn has cultivated relationships with clients that

extend beyond standard hair care. Perfect Pose is where quality hair care and community meet.

"I have people that started coming here when they were 5 years old, and now they are in their thirties and even forties," said Dawn. "Some of my customers still come back to get their hair done even when they move to another state."

Dawn says her favorite part about running Perfect Pose is interacting with customers from the community. In her time working in the neighborhood, Dawn

has fostered relationships with countless people.

"My favorite part is that I get to make people happy and that I get to meet new people every day," she said.

"We treat people with respect no matter what and meet them where they are at because people have so many different things going on in their life. I think that makes us different," she added.

Come in today for all your hair care needs at a reasonable price. Perfect Pose is open on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., and Tuesdays through Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. Perfect Pose is located at 323 East Gun Hill Road, Bronx, NY 10467, served by the Jerome Gun Hill BID.

INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER

By DAVID GREENE



This week, we asked readers their thoughts on the attempted assassination of former U.S. President Donald Trump.



"Honestly, I think it looks like it was staged because if they really wanted to kill this man, they could have killed him like [former U.S. President John F.] Kennedy, [former U.S. President Abraham] Lincoln, all these other presidents they've assassinated, and he just got hit in the ear? To me, it looks like if they really wanted to kill him, they would have killed him."

**Richie Parker,
Parkchester**
Photo by David Greene



"Well, he was lucky. This could change the outcome of the election; you can't quantify it, yeah. Emotionally, voters will maybe go for him after this attempted assassination. Ironically, it may bode well for him as a presidential candidate."

**Lance Rosenbaum,
Norwood**
Photo by David Greene



"The whole thing is very bizarre, very weird, a major dramatic event. I mean history almost changed just by an inch or so. We'd be looking at a very different election if that bullet had been an inch over. You know what's amazing is I figured Trump has such good protection that nobody would ever get off a shot at him. It's pretty weird that the kid was able to sneak in there and do that. I'm not suggesting it was fake; some people seem to think it was fake. I don't think it was a conspiracy. I think it was just a nut; a crazy kid somehow slipped under the fence and got through their defenses."

**Tim Burrows,
Kingsbridge Heights**
Photo by David Greene



"I am suspicious about the assassination attempt; I don't believe it was a real assassination attempt on Former President Trump. I'm concerned about [U.S. President Joe] Biden having stepped out of the race. I think he was pressured unnecessarily and it's concerning that our democracy is at stake. I'm hopeful that Vice President Kamala Harris will be able to lead the country. I think this country has so much racism that I don't know if she will get a lot of votes."

**Cheryl Hurst,
Bedford Park**
Photo by David Greene



"Thank God Trump was only grazed by that bullet; I can't believe the Secret Service let him [the shooter] get through even though they were warned of the threat. I'm usually not a conspiracy theorist, but it seems too convenient considering the facts."

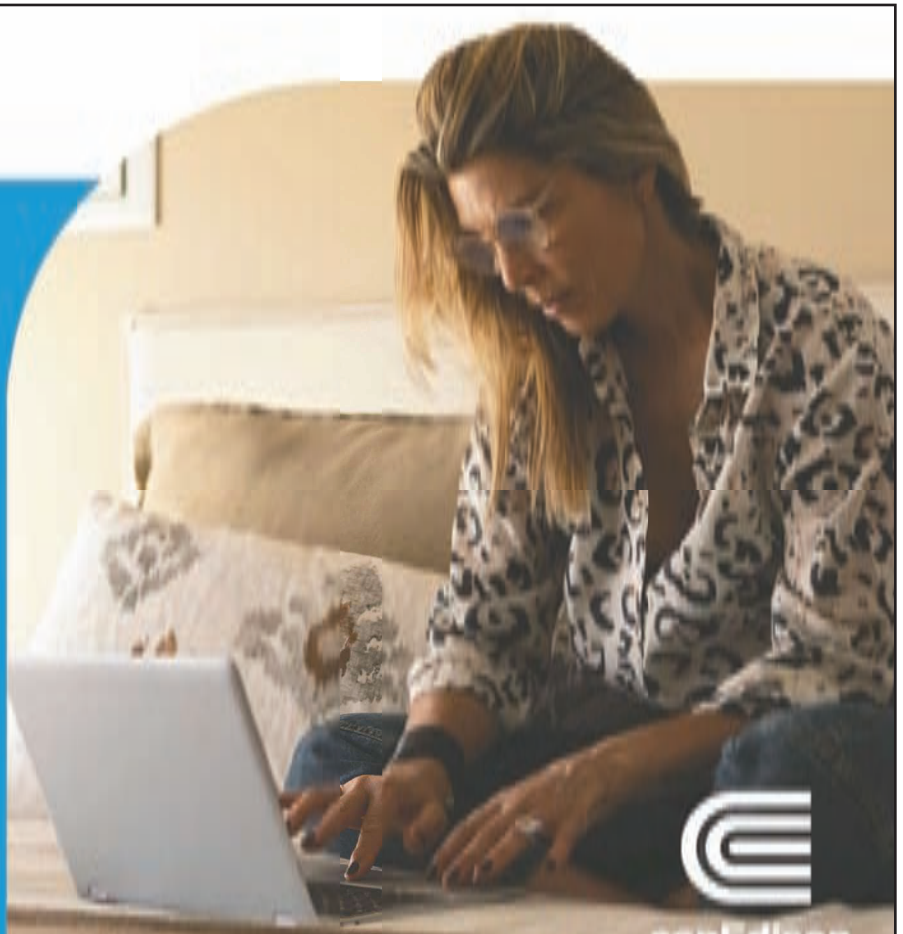
**Dennis MacLane,
Old Bridge New Jersey**
Photo courtesy of Dennis MacLane

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BRONX, JEROME GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (JGHBID), SPONSORED CONTENT

E&N Pet Paradise



By ARIEL PACHECO

E&N Pet Paradise has been a beloved cornerstone of the Gun Hill community for over five decades. Established in 1973 by store owner Augie, the family-owned business has established itself in the heart of the neighborhood.

E&N Pet Paradise specializes in exotic birds and fish. With over 300 birds of various breeds, including finches and canaries, and a wide-ranging variety of fish like African Cichlids and Arowanas, Augie has created a unique place for customers to explore.

“It’s been the dream of a lifetime to open a store at 19 years old and see it thrive for 50 years,” said Augie. “Not many can say that. I am just so blessed to have been able to live out this dream.”

When Augie turned 19, he used the \$5,000 he and his wife had saved up for their wedding to open the storefront. The “E&N” in the store’s name is a tribute to Augie’s first name, Edgar, and his wife’s name, Neldy.



“She told me at first that I was so crazy and bad, but I knew we would make it,” said Augie.

The pet store owner says customers frequently refer to him as the “Mayor of Gun Hill” as a term of endearment and a reflection of the connection he has with local residents. Augie’s love for animals traces back to summers he spent in Puerto Rico as a child, where his passion for animals grew.

E&N Pet Paradise also sells

food for birds and fish along with filters for fish tanks. Augie says he makes sure to give customers anything they need, taking satisfaction in providing exceptional customer service.

“I have such loyal customers that have been coming here since they were kids and a lot of people also come from all over to see the store,” said Augie.

E&N Pet Paradise has been a beloved cornerstone of the Gun Hill community in Norwood for



Photos by Ariel Pacheco

A BIRD PERCHES on Augie’s hand at E&N Pet Paradise on July 19, 2024.

SOME OF THE exotic birds sold at E&N Pet Paradise store are seen on July 19, 2024.

A SCHOOL OF some of the exotic fish sold at E&N Pet Paradise store is seen on July 19, 2024.

THE E&N PET Paradise storefront is seen on July 19, 2024.

over five decades. Established in 1973 by store owner Augie, the family-owned business has established itself in the heart of the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District.

Child Who Suffered Cardiac Arrest Back at Church

By DAVID GREENE

A week after paramedics transferred a 2-year-old girl who the FDNY said had suffered a cardiac arrest to hospital during a church service in Kingsbridge Heights, the pastor of *Iglesia Cristiana Tabernaculo de Gracia* [The Christian Church of the Tabernacle of Grace] told *Norwood News* that the child was doing fine and was back at church.

The building where the incident took place is the Bethel Global Methodist Church, located at 3404 Bailey Avenue. However, when contacted for comment, representatives from the Methodist Church said it is currently renting out the church for Sunday services to *Iglesia Cristiana Tabernaculo de Gracia* and referred us to the representatives for the latter.

As reported, police and EMS were called to the church at 2:09 p.m. on Sunday, July 14, for reports of a cardiac arrest in progress. According to audio recordings of police radio transmission on the incident, a police officer from the 50th Precinct said CPR was being administered to the child, who was reportedly not breathing, when police arrived at

the scene.

Minutes later, an officer was heard informing his dispatch that the infant was breathing once again, and the child was transported to Montefiore Medical Center in Norwood for follow-up treatment.

Meanwhile, a representative from FDNY/EMS said that emergency services were alerted to a report of a cardiac arrest on Sunday, July 14, at 2:09 p.m. at 3404 Bailey Avenue, between West 234th Street and Bailey Place. They confirmed one patient was transported to Montefiore Medical Center and neither the patient's condition nor their description was known.

On Monday, July 22, the church's pastor, Pastor Kerlin Calderon, was asked if the baby's medical issue had been heat-related. He replied, "Oh no! It wasn't heat-related. The baby had a little fever, and they took her to the hospital."

Asked about the police dispatch report that the baby was unresponsive/not breathing, Calderon said, "No... Because she had some molars that are growing in the back of her mouth and because of that, the mom, she called the

ambulance."

Asked if CPR was administered to the child, Calderon said, "I'm not aware of those details, if CPR was administered or not. I just know I spoke to the mom before I gave you a call to see how the baby was doing. We saw [the] mom yesterday as well at the church and everybody was doing all right."

Asked if it had been church congregants who had administered aid to the child on the day in question, Calderon said, "Well, I'm not privy to those details because I wasn't there." Asked if the child was back at church on Sunday, July 21, Calderon said, "Of course, yes. The baby's doing okay. The family is doing okay." Calderon said that his church has been serving the community for the last 7 years.



Photo by David Greene

PEOPLE ARE SEEN on Sunday, July 14, 2024, at 2:34 p.m. outside Bethel Global Methodist Church, located at 3404 Bailey Avenue in the Kingsbridge Heights section of The Bronx, where a 2-year-old infant was reportedly administered CPR following a cardiac arrest during a Sunday service of *Iglesia Cristiana Tabernaculo de Gracia* (The Christian Church of the Tabernacle of Grace) which, according to Bethel Global Methodist Church, is renting the church space on Sundays from Bethel Global Methodist Church.

Annual Bronx Anti-Bullying Resource Fair Returns

By EMILY SAWAKED

On a sunny July 17th, the Bronx office of New York Psychotherapy and Counseling Center (NYPCC) hosted its 6th annual Anti-Bullying Resource Fair on 137th Street and Alexander Avenue

in Mott Haven. NYPCC is a non-profit, community-oriented, mental health organization operating across New York State, offering several services to the community, mostly centered on therapy and counseling for those of all ages. This



Photo by Emily Sawaked

KIDS PARTICIPATE IN a relay race at the 6th Annual Bronx Anti-Bullying Resource Fair at Alexander Avenue and 135-137th Street in Mott Haven on Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

year marks its 50th anniversary.

The Bronx fair brought together all members of the Bronx Anti-Bullying Coalition, founded by NYPCC's Bronx office in 2018. The fair offered a myriad of resources that parents, children, and other Bronx community members could easily access, in many cases for free.

The Bronx coalition was created to bring awareness to the signs of bullying, help children and parents learn strategies to deal with the problem, and connect families with support resources.

Selina LeBron, senior community engagement specialist at NYPCC, detailed various programs for youth that include music, art, and other extracurricular programs to keep them engaged. NYPCC also works with schools to provide resources and workshops on anti-bullying. LeBron also mentioned their work with adult centers around workplace bullying and the mistreatment of elders.

"We visit local nursing homes and adult home daycare centers," LeBron said. "We do free workshops for them. We just engage with them and let them know that we're here. We can help, be of assistance to you, and whatever you need. If you need therapy, if you need legal services, if you need anything. If you need to know where the nearest food pantry is, we'll let you know where that is," she added.

Meanwhile, Scott Bloom, director of

special projects for NYPCC, said their work with adults stems from childhood bullying. "Statistics show that 20% of adults who were bullied during middle school and high school, in adulthood have, [or] continue to have low self-esteem, anxiety issues, depression, and suicidal ideation. It usually gets uncovered in the sessions and the assessments that are done."

NYPCC's CEO of 41 years, Elliott Klein said NYPCC is open seven days a week, including evenings. "There were other agencies, but they weren't open in the evenings," he said. "They weren't open on the weekends. They didn't have psychiatrists. They didn't have Spanish speaking staff. We came, and we met the needs. We now have the largest clinic in New York State on 579 Cortland Avenue [in Mott Haven, The Bronx]."

In the future, NYPCC is also focused on tackling gang prevention, which they say will be addressed at an upcoming symposium at Hostos Community College. Other target topics include social media use by children (cyberbullying), and anxiety in children. Plenty of their workshops, particularly those for elementary and middle school-aged children, center around similar topics. The group also engages with school guidance counselors at school events.

LeBron said a dream for the future

(continued on page 16)

NEWS BRIEFS

By **SÍLE MOLONEY & ASHLEY CASTILLO**

Petition Launched to Save St. Barnabas High School

A petition has been launched to save the private, Catholic high school for girls, St. Barnabas High School (SBHS), located at 25 E 240th Street in Woodlawn Heights, which the Board of Trustees announced on June 28 had closed with immediate effect due to declining enrollment, a decrease in donations, and rising costs.

Summer programs are still going ahead, and a meeting was due to take place in July to assist parents with alternative arrangements for their daughters. The Women of Woodlawn group shared a link to the petition on July 12, saying, "The decision by the Saint Barnabas High School, Bronx NY Board of Trustees to close the High School with zero notice to families is irresponsible." They said the school closure would have huge impacts not only on the SBHS families but on the local community.

"SBHS is used by a host of local organizations to host functions, fundraisers and meetings," the group wrote. "We urge the Board of Trustees to be more transparent with the community and consider alternatives to closure. Please sign this petition created by students!" The petition can be found on www.change.org under the description "St. Barnabas High School."

Norwood News reached out to the Catholic Archdiocese of New York for comment on the allegations of zero no-

tice as well as an update on the current situation and will share any feedback we receive. The archdiocese announced on May 1 that two other Catholic schools, including one in Fordham Heights, St. Simon Stock School, located on 2195 Valentine Avenue, will also cease operations at the end of the 2023-24 academic year. Transfiguration School in Westchester was the other impacted school.

Last year, we reported how Success Academy Charter School had opened on the former site of the now closed St. Brendan Catholic School in Norwood, which had been educating students locally for over a century, having been founded in 1908. The charter school opening followed what were ultimately unsuccessful protests to keep the school open in February 2023, by staff, students and parents of students attending the Catholic school.

St. Brendan's closure was part of an announcement on Feb. 15, 2023, that 11 other Catholic schools across the City would close and four *additional* Catholic schools in The Bronx would merge into two. That news followed the previous closure of six other Catholic schools in The Bronx in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic due to declining income. Of the twelve impacted school closures announced in 2023, six were, once again, located in The Bronx, five were in Manhattan, and one was on Staten Island.

Community Activist Lyn Pyle to be Honored

Local arts group, DREAM!, and the Knox Gates community will host a "Peace in Our Streets Block Party" on Saturday, Aug. 10, with food, games, music, and fun, to honor the life of the late community leader and activist, Lyn Pyle. The event will take place at 3418 Gates Place in Norwood from noon to 5 p.m. Pyle who started the local arts

group died on Oct. 13, 2023.

Man who Shot Norwood Cop in 1982 to be Released

A 62-year-old man convicted of fatally shooting an off-duty NYPD officer who lived in Norwood during a Norwood robbery more than 40 years ago will soon be released on parole, the New York Post reported on July 20. The Post reported that State records show Jose Curet, who shot Officer George Werdann on Feb. 21, 1982, when Curet was a teenager, will soon be released from Fishkill Correctional Facility after a Parole Board decision in his favor was taken earlier this month.

According to local Norwood resident, Richard Marias, Werdann used to live with his family at 3050 Perry Avenue. The Post also reported that retired NYPD Lt. Donald Pagani, 64, a childhood friend of the then-23-year-old Werdann, attended 16 hearings to try to convince the Parole Board to keep Curet behind bars. According to Marias, Pagani grew up on Norwood's Decatur Avenue and his own father, also a cop, was killed during an armored car heist in The Bronx several decades earlier.

According to The Post, Werdann was off duty when he spotted Curet, then 19, and his 17-year-old brother Roberto running from a Bronx grocery store after a robbery took place. The Post reported that Werdann gave chase, following the brothers in his personal car as they ran down Valentine Avenue.

He reportedly didn't know Curet was crouching behind a car with a gun as he drove by, taking three shots, the third hitting him in the back of the head. The Post reported that the two brothers were arrested six weeks later in Puerto Rico. Jose pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 20 years to life. Roberto

pleaded guilty to robbery and served more than 20 years because of alleged contraband infractions in prison, according to State records.

The Police Benevolent Association President Patrick Hendry also opposes Curet's release, citing an ever more left-leaning Patrol Board. P.S./M.S. 20 P.O. George J. Werdann III is so named in Werdann's memory. The Post noted that Curet will be the 42nd person to have killed a cop in New York State to be granted their freedom in seven years.

AOC Leads Movement to Pass DEFIANCE Act in Congress

Following the passage of the DEFIANCE Act (Disrupt Explicit Forged Images and Non-Consensual Edits Act of 2024) in the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), who represents parts of The Bronx and Queens, is leading the efforts to pass the legislation in the House of Representatives.

She said the DEFIANCE Act would guarantee federal protections for survivors of nonconsensual deepfake pornography for the first time, granting the right to take civil action against individuals who knowingly produce, distribute, or receive nonconsensual sexually explicit digital forgeries.

Applauding the senate passage of the bill, she said over 90% of all deepfake videos made are nonconsensual sexually explicit images, and women are the targets 9 times out of 10. "I'm committed to collaborating with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to shepherd the bill through the House of Representatives to get it to the President's desk," she said. "Together, we can give survivors the justice they deserve." The bill currently has ten bipartisan cosponsors in the House of Representatives, her office said.

Norwood: Movies in the Park after Dark Kicks Off in the Oval

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Dozens of residents from Norwood and Bedford Park of all ages gathered at the Williamsbridge Oval Track and Field in Norwood on July 10 to watch the Pixar movie, "Finding Nemo," kicking off the "Movies in the Park after Dark" summer series which will be running in the Oval throughout the summer.

The series is hosted by District 11 City Council Member Eric Dinowitz, who broadly represents the northwest Bronx, in collaboration with Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District (BID) and Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC).

The movie line-up for the rest of the summer includes "Space Jam," which will be screened on July 24, followed by "Kung Fu Panda" on Aug. 5, and "Encanto" on Aug. 19. Entry to all movies is free and begins at 8 p.m. Pre-movie activities begin at 7 p.m. and include free

ice cream and face-painting.

Dinowitz said of the first film screening, "When I was a teenager, I remember heading to Bryant Park in the summer evenings for their movie nights and wondering, 'Why can't we have this in The Bronx?' The answer to that is we absolutely CAN have this in The Bronx! Two years ago, I worked with the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance and Altice to create the first summertime movie series that could be enjoyed by all."

The councilman continued "I am proud to say that we have expanded this series to Williamsbridge Oval with the help of fantastic partners such as the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, the Jerome Gun Hill BID, and Montefiore Medical Center."

He added, "By holding our movies series throughout our local parks, we are ensuring that folks of all ages and from all over the district have easy access to

this recreation in beautiful, accessible locations. The Williamsbridge Oval is a beloved spot to many, so it is especially rewarding to host the series in a place that serves as a community oasis."

One parent at the screening told *Norwood News* it was a great environment for children. "It's always nice to give the kids something to do that is outdoors," she said. "You just look around and all the kids are running around, smiling; it's great!"

Another parent said her family plans on attending all four nights of the movie night series. "It's free, the weather is nice, and everyone here seems to like it a lot. Me and my kids will definitely come back all summer!"

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND residents settle in for the first evening of the "Movies in the Park after Dark" series at the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood on July 10, 2024.



Photo by Ariel Pacheco

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND residents settle in for the first screening of the "Movies in the Park after Dark" series at the Williamsbridge Oval park in Norwood on July 10, 2024.

CRIME FILE

BY SÍLE MOLONEY



Fordham Heights: Murder Inquiry Launches after Multiple Shooting

A 28-year-old man has died following a multiple shooting that took place in Fordham Heights, police said. The NYPD said that on Saturday, July 13, at around 10.18 p.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding an assault in progress in the vicinity of 2247 Webster Avenue. They said upon arrival, they observed a 28-year-old man with a gunshot wound to his torso and a 26-year-old woman with a gunshot wound to her hand.

They said both were transported by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital, the woman in stable condition, and the man in critical condition. The said the male victim was later pronounced deceased, there are no arrests, and the investigation remains ongoing. Police said the deceased was later identified as Thomas McCellan of East 171st Street in Claremont.

Fordham Heights: One Man Fatally Stabbed, 2nd Man Stabbed in Torso & Hospitalized

A 34-year-old man died following a fatal stabbing in Fordham Heights, police said. An NYPD spokesperson said that on Sunday, July 14, at around 3.31 p.m., officers responded to a 911 call regarding two men who had been stabbed in the vicinity of 2155 Grand Concourse. They said upon arrival, officers observed a 34-year-old male with a stab wound to the chest and a 31-year-old male with a stab wound to his torso.

They said EMS responded and transported both men to St. Barnabas Hospital where the 34-year-old male was later pronounced deceased. The investigation remains ongoing. Police said the deceased was later identified as Richard Vasquez, of the Grand Concourse in Fordham Heights.



Kingsbridge Heights: Man Shot in Face and Arm on Bailey Avenue

The NYPD is asking for the public's help identifying the person seen in the accompanying photo above who they say is wanted in connection to an assault that occurred in Kingsbridge Heights. Police said that on Thursday, July 4, at around 9.50 p.m., in front of 3340 Bailey Avenue, an unidentified person shot a 45-year-old male victim in the face and right shoulder. They said the victim was brought by EMS to St. Barnabas Hospital in critical condition, while the unidentified suspect fled the scene in an unknown direction.

Bronx Man Gets 34 Years to Life for Rape, Sexual Assault

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced on Friday, July 19, that Bronx man, Kemoy Royal, 34, was sentenced to 34 years to life in prison for raping two women and sexually assaulting a third woman over the course of six days in his Eastchester apartment. She said one victim was rescued after she sent a message on a food delivery app, asking the restaurant to call police.

Clark said Royal of Pratt Avenue in The Bronx was sentenced on July 19 to 17 years to life in prison for predatory sexual assault, 10 years for first-degree rape, and 7 years for an attempted criminal sexual act in the first degree. She said the sentences were to run consecutively.

The court heard that Royal was convicted by a jury on May 14, after a two-day deliberation. Upon his release, he must register under the Sex Offender Registration Act or SORA, according to the prosecution.

According to the investigation, on June 13, 2022, Royal met with a 27-year-old woman who he had been speaking to on a dating app for a few days and invited her to his home. He later raped the victim, forced her to perform sexual acts on him and performed sexual acts on the victim without her consent.

On June 14, 2022, Royal met the second victim, a 26-year-old woman, on the street claiming he knew her through a friend. The court heard that he lured her to his apartment, refused to let her leave, and threatened to kill her. Royal also attempted to force her to perform sexual acts on him and strangled her before letting her leave hours later.

The court also heard that on June 18, 2022, the third victim, a 24-year-old woman, met with the defendant at his home after talking on a dating app. Royal refused to let her leave, took her phone, and threatened to kill her. He also strangled the victim, raped her and forced her to perform sexual acts. The court heard that early the next morning, the victim told Royal she wanted to order food, did so through a food delivery app, while also asking the restaurant to call the police. The Yonkers restaurant called the police, who responded and arrested Royal.

District Attorney Clark thanked the prosecution team, including those who work in the child abuse/sex crimes bureau, human trafficking unit, domestic violence unit, crime victims' assistance bureau, and forensic science unit. Clark also thanked those in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Department of Forensic Biology, and various members of the NYPD.

The nonprofit, Freedom Youth NYC, have long been working to help survivors of human trafficking in The Bronx. For more information, email Moniqueriley@freedomyouthfamilyjusticecenter.org or call (929) 612-3667.

If you are a victim of human trafficking, or if you have information about other victims, please call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888, or the Bronx DA's Crime Victims Assistance Unit, (718) 590-2115.

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

Patrol Borough: Bronx Predict: All

CompStat Book Week of 07/15/24 - 07/21/24

	% Chg	28 Day			Year to Date		
		2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	- %	8	13	-38.5 %	61	77	-20.8 %
Rape	-33.3 %	22	34	-35.3 %	230	222	3.6 %
Robbery	-2.8 %	419	443	-5.4 %	2,720	2,596	5.2 %
Felony Assault	-12.6 %	749	746	0.1 %	4,625	4,514	2.5 %
Burglary	-17.9 %	235	222	5.9 %	1,592	1,670	-4.7 %
Grand Larceny	17.3 %	720	610	18.0 %	4,941	4,303	14.8 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-19.8 %	366	423	-13.5 %	2,278	2,904	-22.9 %
Total	-5.6 %	2,519	2,493	1.0 %	16,447	16,326	0.7 %
Patrol	-6.9 %	2,354	2,331	1.0 %	15,346	15,175	1.1 %
Transit	-50.0 %	18	12	50.0 %	176	162	8.6 %
Housing	20.6 %	147	150	-2.0 %	925	989	-6.5 %
Shooting Victims	120.0 %	43	57	-24.6 %	219	222	-1.4 %
Shooting Incidents	100.0 %	36	42	-14.3 %	179	182	-1.6 %
UCR Rape*	-37.5 %	39	49	-20.4 %	371	362	-2.9 %
Other Sex Crimes	19.0 %	87	77	13.0 %	685	604	13.4 %
Petit Larceny	-29.4 %	1,170	1,425	-17.9 %	8,823	9,906	-10.9 %
Misd. Assault	-6.5 %	949	848	11.9 %	6,179	5,825	6.1 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	14	11	27.3 %
Traffic Fatalities	- %	3	2	50.0 %	25	23	8.7 %

All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17. Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSPL) definitions. * Uniformed Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape.

MAJOR CRIMES IN The Bronx for the 28-day period ending July 21, 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, and (right) year-to-date major crimes in The Bronx as of July 21, 2024, compared to the same period last year. Source: NYPD.

Patrol Borough: Bronx Predict: 052

CompStat Book Week of 07/15/24 - 07/21/24

	% Chg	28 Day			Year to Date		
		2024	2023	% Chg	2024	2023	% Chg
Murder	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	6	3	100.0 %
Rape	-100.0 %	1	4	-75.0 %	26	19	36.8 %
Robbery	-6.3 %	47	51	-7.8 %	279	254	9.8 %
Felony Assault	7.7 %	78	64	21.9 %	420	368	14.1 %
Burglary	-33.3 %	15	17	-11.8 %	107	133	-19.5 %
Grand Larceny	-17.6 %	66	56	21.4 %	429	394	8.9 %
Grand Larceny Auto	-23.1 %	27	26	-3.8 %	193	167	3.2 %
Total	-14.5 %	236	221	6.8 %	1,460	1,358	7.5 %
Patrol	-13.2 %	233	219	6.4 %	1,431	1,327	7.8 %
Transit	-100.0 %	3	2	50.0 %	25	28	-10.7 %
Housing	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	4	3	33.3 %
Shooting Victims	0.0 %	3	5	-40.0 %	19	12	66.3 %
Shooting Incidents	0.0 %	2	2	0.0 %	12	9	33.3 %
UCR Rape*	-100.0 %	2	4	-50.0 %	38	29	31.0 %
Other Sex Crimes	- %	6	8	-25.0 %	66	55	20.0 %
Petit Larceny	-13.3 %	122	154	-20.8 %	1,012	1,419	-28.7 %
Misd. Assault	-12.5 %	79	61	29.5 %	479	461	3.9 %
Hate Crimes	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %	1	0	- %
Traffic Fatalities	0.0 %	0	1	-100.0 %	3	4	-25.0 %

All figures are preliminary and subject to further analysis and revision. Oath Summonses as of 6/13/17. Unless otherwise noted, crime statistics reflect New York State Penal Law (NYSPL) definitions. * Ununiformed Crime Reporting (UCR) Rape consists of all crimes defined in the FBI UCR definition of rape.

MAJOR CRIMES IN the 52nd Precinct, which generally covers Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, Norwood, University Heights, and Bronx Park, for the 28-day period ending July 21, 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, and (right) year-to-date major crimes in the 52nd Precinct as of July 21, 2024, compared to the same period last year. Source: NYPD.



DIVISION OF BRIDGES

INVITATION FOR BIDS

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE OF VARIOUS MOVABLE BRIDGES IN NYC
Borough of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx
Contract No. MBPM24
Federal Aid Project No. TBD
NYSPIN: X763.05
NYCPIN: 84123MBBR587
EPIN: 84123B0024

EPIN: 84123B0024 - PIN:84123MBBR587 - Preventative Maintenance of Various Movable Bridges in NYC, in the Borough of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. This Competitive Sealed Bid is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this Bid must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors should visit the PASSPort public Portal at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/mocs/passport/about-passport.page> and click on the "Search Funding Opportunities in PASSPort". Doing so will take one to the public portal of all procurements in the PASSPort system.

To locate the Competitive Sealed Bid, insert the EPIN: **84123B0024**, into the Keyword search field. In order to respond to the Competitive Sealed Bid, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

A pre-bid conference via ZOOM is scheduled for 7/31/2024 at 10:00 am. Those wishing to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link.

The deadline for the submission of questions is 8/7/2024 by 4:00 pm.

The bid due date (submission via PASSPort) as instructed is due 9/4/2024 by 11:00 am.

Bid opening date via ZOOM is 9/4/2024 at 11:30 am.

This Project is federally aided and is subject to the provision of Title 23, U.S. code, as amended, and applicable New York State Statutes. In compliance with these provisions the minimum wages to be paid to laborers and mechanics are included in wage schedules that are set out in the bid proposal.

This procurement is subject to DBE participation goals. The DBE goal for this project is 3%.

As-Built Drawings will be available upon request from the Contractors. Contractors need to sign Confidentiality agreement to view As-built drawings.

Any inquiries concerning this Competitive Sealed Bid should be directed by email, under the subject line "Preventative Maintenance of Various Movable Bridges in NYC" to the email address of the Authorized Agency Contact, Navneet Kumar, at nkumar@dot.nyc.gov

Eric Adams, Mayor
Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

Opinion

Prioritizing Minority Mental Health

By ANGELA HANSON

Throughout July, during National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, it is important to acknowledge the health disparities that exist within communities as it relates to the use of tobacco

products. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), smoking is more highly prevalent in adults with mental health conditions than those without.

Approximately 480,000 deaths annually are attributed to tobacco products, with a staggering 200,000 of these deaths occurring among adults who smoke and struggle with mental health issues. These numbers highlight a dual crisis.

Individuals with mental health issues who smoke, face heightened risks of smoking-related illnesses and premature death. These facts highlight a press-

ing need for targeted interventions that not only address tobacco use, but also prioritize the mental well-being of vulnerable populations.

According to the CDC, historically, minority communities have faced disparities in mental health care access and outcomes. These disparities are compounded when considering tobacco use, where culture, income, and other factors often create barriers to quitting smoking and treatment.

As we strive for healthier communities, we should not overlook the link

between minority mental health and tobacco use. By addressing these challenges head-on, we can make meaningful strides towards a future where all individuals, regardless of their mental health status or background, can lead healthier, smoke-free lives.

For more information on NYC Smoke-Free or to lend support in ending NYC's devastating tobacco epidemic please visit www.NYCSmokeFree.org

Angela Hanson is a Bronx Reality Check youth engagement officer with NYC Smoke-Free, Public Health Solutions.

Opinion

Historic Ruling for People with Disabilities

By REGINA MARTINEZ-ESTELA

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) made disability rights history, releasing a highly anticipated final rule implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which will prove to be a powerful

tool in fighting discrimination based on disability in healthcare and human services. It is significant news, especially after more than 40 years of advocacy by the disability community to secure greater protections.

Ensuring that people with disabilities will be treated equally as members of the community, Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs receiving federal financial assistance. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights, the new rule, titled "Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in HHS Programs or Activities," advances equity and bolsters protections

for people with disabilities under Section 504.

The final rule covers protections for key provisions, including discrimination in medical treatment, community integration, accessibility of medical equipment, web, mobile app, and kiosk accessibility and value assessment methods. The rule strengthens anti-discrimination and civil rights protections, and ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

The work that Independence Care System (ICS) is doing to improve access to primary and specialty care for people with disabilities will be greatly advanced because of this new rule. This

will support ICS in continuing its work with our partners at New York City Health and Hospitals (H+H), the largest community hospital system in the country, helping to advance health equity and improve health disparities for people with disabilities.

This is a win for the disability community, and for civil rights in America.

Regina Martinez-Estela is president and CEO of Independence Care System (ICS), the first and only Health Home program in New York providing care coordination and services to support the health, mobility, independence and equity of people with physical disabilities.



Letters To The Editor

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

The Evolving Face of America

This weekend, U.S. President Joe Biden withdrew from the presidential election. (And I will confess, I cried.) He didn't have to. He won the nomination de facto and had every right to hold onto his pledged delegates. But Biden's success over fifty years as senator, vice president, and president hinged upon his ability to listen, listen to his constituents, colleagues, detractors and the world at large.

When congressional members asked him to step aside for the future of the Democratic Party, and possibly America,

he listened, a truly patriotic act. This is the crowning moment of an outstanding career. By endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris for president, Biden extended a genuine act of generosity and reality. He chose Kamala Harris as his VP because she is the face of a modern America. This weekend, he passed the torch to the evolving face of America. In solidarity,

**Danielle H. Guggenheim,
Norwood**

MTA Overtime

MTA record \$1.37 billion in employee overtime expenses for 2023 is disappointing.

There is a difference between neces-

sary overtime due to malfunctioning equipment, accidents or adverse weather conditions when attempting to restore service, versus others.

Employees with seniority in their last year of employment enjoy lots of overtime. This results in inflated six figure pensions upon retirement the following year.

MTA management needs to reduce mandatory excessive overtime and double shifts to complete capital projects. This is sometimes done to placate public officials so they may participate in ribbon cutting ceremonies during election seasons.

Future pensions must be calculated based on the final year's base salary and not inflated by overtime. Federal civil servants pensions are calculated based on the average for the last three years of employment. Overtime is not included in

determining the pension of federal employees.

Every dollar counts, be it generated by riders paying at the farebox, city, state or Federal Transit Administration grants. Taxpayers and commuters expect nothing less.

**Larry Penner,
Great Neck**

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

Like us to look into a news story for you?

CALL US AT (929) 318 6595

The New York City Department of Transportation, Traffic Operations Division cordially invites your company to submit bids for the following contract: EPIN: 84124B0013 Management and Operation of the Staten Island Court House Municipal Parking Garage (Specifications) available for download free of charge **starting 7/24/2024**.

This RFX is released through PASSPort, New York City's online procurement portal. Responses to this RFP/RFX must be submitted via PASSPort. To access the RFP/RFX, vendors should visit the PASSPort Public Portal. To reach the Public Portal, visit the following site: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/mocs/passport/about-passport.page> then click on the rectangle captioned "Procurement Navigator," whereupon you will arrive at the Portal. To quickly locate the RFP/RFX, insert the following EPIN, 84124B0013, into the Keyword search field, then click search. To respond to the RFP/RFX, vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system if they have not already done so.

A Pre-Bid Conference via Microsoft TEAMS is **scheduled for 08/05/2024 at 11:00 AM**. Those who wish to attend the pre-bid meeting must email the authorized agency contact for a link no later than **08/02/2024 by 4:00PM**. The deadline for the submission of questions via email is **8/12/2024 by 4:00PM** to the authorized agency contact person. This procurement is subject to participation goals for Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBES) as required by Section 6-129 of the New York Administrative Code. The M/WBE goal for this project is 30%. Any inquiries concerning this IFB should be directed by email, under the subject line "EPIN: 84124B0013 Management and Operation of the Staten Island Court House Municipal Parking Garage to the email address of the Authorized Agency Contact, Shaneza Shinath, at sshinath@dot.nyc.gov or through the PASSPort communication function. Responses to this IFB must be submitted via PASSPort. All Bids must be received via Passport before the Bid Due Date, **08/21/2024, no later than 11:00 AM**. No In Person viewing of bid opening will be permitted. You will find the Microsoft TEAMS Zoom link in Passport with full details. Virtual Bid Opening will be conducted via Zoom Webinar on **08/21/2024 at 11:30AM**.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

COMPILED BY SÍLE MOLONEY & ARIEL PACHECO

Bronx Commercial Development Loan

The Bronx Economic Development Corporation is granting development loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 to eligible businesses in The Bronx. To be eligible, businesses must be located in The Bronx, operating for a minimum of 3 years, be a for profit company, and must be able to provide 3 years of tax returns at the time of the application. For more information or to inquire about your eligibility, visit bxedc.org/business-assistance.

Crime Prevention Safety Awareness Program

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center is hosting a crime prevention safety awareness program which residents can apply to participate in, and also enjoy free dinner on Monday, Aug. 5, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 3450 Dekalb Avenue Bronx, NY 10467. For more information, email NDA@MMC.org.

Mobile Blood Drive

The NYPD 52nd precinct is hosting a blood drive on Thursday, Aug. 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 3016 Webster Avenue Bronx, NY 10467. Blood donors are urgently needed. For more information, visit https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/316403.

Bronx Documentary Center (BDC)

Films Fellowship Program

Applications close for the Bronx Documentary Films Fellowship Program on Tuesday, July 30. The fellowship program includes a \$3,000 stipend for the year, documentary filmmaking courses and professional development workshops, mentorship from BDC staff and visiting filmmakers, documentary film screen-

ings, and more. To apply, and find more information, email info@bronxdoc.org.

Dining Out NYC Deadline

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

Call for Artists

NYC Cultural Affairs and NYC Department of Veterans Services is calling on artists to submit applications for a "Post-9/11 Fallen Service Member Memorial." The deadline to submit applications is Aug. 30. Professional visual artists or artist teams working in any and all mediums, legally authorized to work in the United States, and who are at least 18 years of age, are eligible to apply. For more information visit, <https://nyculture.submittable.com/submit>.

Yankees Summer Clean-Up

The Yankees, in collaboration with the Sanitation Foundation, are hosting a clean-up at Yankee Stadium 1 E 161st Bronx, NY 10451 on Friday, Aug. 2, from 10 a.m. to noon. Volunteers will receive a voucher valid for two tickets to select New York Yankees 2024 regular season home games. Additionally, volunteers at the clean-up that collect the most pounds of trash will also receive a special VIP experience at Yankee Stadium when they take on the Texas Rangers on Sunday, Aug. 11. For more information, visit sanitationfoundation.org/bronx-series.

Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) has open

affordable housing lotteries for housing units at the following locations, among others:

- 234 East 203 Street, with a deadline of Aug. 26.
- 208 East Mosholu Parkway South, with a deadline of July 26.
- 1600 Grand Avenue, with a deadline of July 30.

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

Health & Literacy Fair

The Office of the Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, in partnership with Montefiore Einstein and BlueCross BlueShield, is hosting a back-to-school Health & Literacy Fair on Thursday, Aug. 8, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at P.S. 65 Mother Hale Academy, 677 East 141st Street, Bronx, NY. There will be free school supplies, free haircuts and more.

Career Connections Event

The Office of the Bronx Borough President and NYS Department of Labor is hosting a Career Connections "Honoring our Heroes" event on Thursday, Aug. 1, from noon to 6 p.m. at Bronx Borough Hall, 851 Grand Concourse, Bronx. Explore various career options and find new opportunities. All are welcome regardless of their veteran status.

Yonkers ALS Ice Bucket Challenge

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge returns to Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts in Yonkers on Saturday, Aug. 3, at 1 p.m. to raise money and awareness for ALS, a nervous system disease that weakens muscles and impacts physical function. It is often called Lou Gehrig's disease after the baseball player who was diagnosed

with it. The exact cause of the disease is still not known. "Be Bold, Get Cold!"

Kossuth Playground Clean-Up

Azez Star are hosting a clean-up of Kossuth Playground in Norwood, located at 111 East Mosholu Parkway North, on Thursday, July 25, at 1.30 p.m. Over 20 ASEZ STAR (Save the Earth from A to Z Students Take Action Right Now) volunteers will take part. ASEZ STAR is the international school age student volunteer group from the World Mission Society Church of God, which is celebrating the 60th anniversary this year. Volunteers aim to contribute to saving the earth and mankind from pressing environmental risks. For more information, visit asez-star.org.

Disability Pride Month at NYPL

The New York Public Library is celebrating Disability Pride Month throughout July. Discover a wide array of accessible resources, including book recommendations, accessible technology training, braille study groups, and more. Join NYPL for free events for all ages. Visit www.nypl.org.

Summer Streets

With the return of Summer Streets, the City's signature soundtrack of honking horns and rushing traffic will quieten down in parts of all five boroughs so its residents and visitors can walk, bike, run, play and enjoy special programming from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on designated Saturdays. This year's offering will almost double the span of last year's, clearing 20 miles of car-free stretches. On Saturday, Aug. 24, The Bronx's Grand Concourse will be open from East Tremont Avenue to Mosholu Parkway.

Out & About

Compiled by ARIEL PACHECO

EVENTS

Join District 11 City Council Member Eric Dinowitz, the Jerome Gun Hill BID, and the Mosholu Preservation Corporation for **Movies in the Park After Dark** on Monday, Aug. 5, at 8 p.m. for a screening of DreamWorks' "Kung Fu Panda" at the Williamsbridge Oval Track and Field, 3325 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. Entry is free. For more information, email D11scheduling@council.nyc.gov.

The Bronx Historical Society presents the **Bronx Basketball Hall of Fame** on Saturday, July 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 3266 Bainbridge Ave, Bronx, NY 10467. The Bronx Basketball Hall of Fame highlights the rich histories of basketball in The Bronx, starting from the very early years of the game up to the present. For more information,

email education@bronxhistoricalsociety.org.

FOOD

The **Bronx Park East Farmers Market** returns on Sunday, Aug. 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 2045 Bronx Park East, Bronx, NY 10462. The farmers market will feature vendors showcasing their fruits, vegetables, herbs, eggs, and various wholesome goods. For more information, email bronx@ubhealthproject.org.

The **Bronx Night Market** returns on Saturday, Aug. 3, at 4 p.m. at 1 Fordham Plaza, The Bronx, NY 10458. The Market will feature over 40 vendors and showcase a diverse array of cuisines for everyone to enjoy. Entry is free. For more information, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/night-markets-nyc-fordham-plaza-tickets-807361689547.

PHOTOGRAPHY

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

Sunday, Aug. 4, from noon to 3 p.m. at 2570 Independence Ave. Bronx, NY 10463. The photos will depict scenes from Riverdale, Kingsbridge, Spuyten Duyvil, Marble Hill, and Inwood around the turn of the 20th century. For more information, email info@kingsbridgehistoricalsociety.org.

KIDS

Lehman College presents **Kids Rule Weekend 2024** on Saturday, Aug. 3, and Sunday, Aug. 4, from noon to 5 p.m. at 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, Bronx, NY 10468. Kids Rule Weekend features two days of theater, music, magic, water slides, pony rides, and more. For more information, email dante.albertie@lehman.cuny.edu.

The City Parks Foundation is hosting a **Puppet Show** in the Williamsbridge Oval Park on Thursday, July 25, at 11 a.m. at the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center 3225 Reservoir Oval East, Bronx, NY 10467. The production features an original commissioned,

musical soundtrack that brings samba center-stage, handcrafted Carnival festival floats on parade, and one-of-a-kind marionettes donning their most vibrant celebration costumes. For more information, visit cityparksfoundation.org/puppetmobile.

MOVEMENT

Join the Bronx Council on the Arts for **Health and Fitness at Poe Cottage** on Thursday, Aug. 1, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, 2640 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10458, for yoga and belly dancing classes. Classes will be taught by Margarita Deida. For more information, call (718) 931-9500.

NYC Parks is hosting **Senior Splash Wednesday** every Wednesday from July 8 through August 30, from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. at Van Cortlandt Pool, located at West 242nd Street and Broadway, Bronx, NY 10471. For more information, call (718) 548-2415.

Will Immigration Determine the Election Outcome?

(continued from page 2)

placement at a different shelter. Some were ticketed by the NYPD.

NY1 reported in August 2023 that according to the mayor's office, 93,000 migrants were processed at that stage, with hundreds more arriving daily. Meanwhile, according to an Asylum Seeker Spending Report released by the Office of the State Comptroller, the State spent more than \$713 million in emergency spending through March 31 this year on people seeking asylum in the United States.

The Bronx Times reported on Oct. 6, 2023, that the 56-room Royal Hotel, located at 3362 Boston Road by East Gun Hill Road in Williamsbridge, was converted into an emergency migrant shelter for migrant families. The general manager of the hotel, who declined to give his name when he later spoke to *Norwood News*, said, "The hotel is still being used as a shelter and they [migrants] have to check in and out. [There] are no problems."

However, some Norwood residents and workers we spoke to in recent months were divided on the growing migrant population, as well as who they intend to vote for in the presidential election this fall. "As of right now, I really don't know if I even want to vote," said Daniella, a customer service representative at Mosholu Optical, located on East Gun Hill Road in Norwood, who declined to give her surname.

"I am not sure yet, but I am not going to vote for Trump or Biden," she said. "We had no negative issues with the migrants. A lot of our communities, especially in The Bronx, are migrants, and all of my friends are children of migrants, and migrants themselves," she added.

Daniella continued, "I don't agree with a lot of stuff Trump has said [about undocumented migrants] and he is against the migrants, placing a ban against migration [from] Muslim countries," she said. "As for Biden, on the issue with Palestine, I don't like the way he is approaching it. It feels wrong for me to vote for someone who [...] bans these people from coming in."

The so-called Muslim Ban, established under the Trump administration in January 2017, is an executive order which banned immigrants from traveling to the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries. Many were people fleeing violence, hoping to reunite with their families, or access medical treatment. The Trump administration said at the time that the list was based, to a degree, on a similar list compiled during the Obama administration.

Daniella was not the only voter who expressed disillusionment with then-presidential candidates, Biden and Trump, on the issue of migration, nor the only undecided voter. "The migrants

in New York [are] a security concern," said Mohammed Iqbal Hussain, general secretary for the North Bronx Islamic Center, located on East 206th Street in Norwood.

Iqbal Hussain has lived on Hull Avenue since 1997 and expressed frustration over a criminal drug and arms bust and arrests which took place in early April at 3259 Hull Avenue in Norwood, where it was found there were migrants squatting in the basement. It is unknown if they were documented or undocumented migrants, but they were found to be squatting there, and some were also charged with child endangerment. "So many problems with the migrants! I feel very antsy now," Iqbal Hussain said.

He continued "It's not right and too many of them are walking around here squatting in houses, and at night you can't even go to work. There are a lot of people renting rooms and places in their houses to these people with no paperwork. [They] are out all hours in the night hanging out on the streets. They have a right to stay, and they are human, but supposedly are destroying the community, and no one is talking about it."

On February 28, migrants were also found to be living illegally in a furniture store at 305 East Kingsbridge Road, before they were removed by law enforcement. Migrants were also found to be living illegally on the grounds of the Old Fordham Library located at 2556 Bainbridge Avenue in Fordham Manor.

On his feelings around voting in November, he said, "I don't vote for Donald Trump or Biden, because they are using municipal money toward the migrants, and they are terrorizing the community."

Meanwhile, James Bishop, director of support services at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in Norwood, said, "We always had migrants, but they weren't what they are now with the asylum, and have a huge influx of them. Of course, our afterschool programs and our crisis and prevention programs have been affected."

Bishop explained how the community center has had an increase in both individual migrants and migrant families seeking "clothing, sponsors for work," and "help with food insecurities because the shelters don't let them cook, and they have very limited meal options."

Referring to the 60-day shelter rule for migrants, Bishop continued, "The older kids usually drop out because they are out on the streets trying to make ends meet. It is very hard to work with them because they will be moved to different shelters."

Meanwhile, Bronx native Nora Adams, a medical student and member of New York City Healthcare Workers for Palestine, said, "I plan to vote but will



Photo by Sherica Daley.

MEMBERS OF NEW York City Healthcare Workers for Palestine march along Fordham Road on Friday, May 3, 2024.

not be voting for Joe Biden." Adams and other medical students attended the Bronx Rally for Gaza on Friday, May 3, at One Fordham Plaza on the Fordham Manor/Belmont border.

"The purpose of the rally was to draw connections between oppression in The Bronx and oppression in Gaza," Adams said. "Biden is part of the same system that is supporting genocide and part of the overall capitalist system of the United

States. I will vote down the ballot, but neither presidential candidate supports or represents me."

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

Editor's Note: Though the President Joe Biden has received criticism for his approach in relation to Gaza, the U.S. Congress ultimately voted to fund U.S. military support in both Ukraine and Israel.

All interviews were carried out before Biden dropped out of the race.

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A Pre-Proposal conference via TEAMS is **scheduled for 07/24/2024 at 11:00 am**. Those who wish to attend must email the authorized agency contact for a link no later than **07/23/2024 by 4:00PM**. The deadline for the submission of questions via email is **07/31/2024 by 4:00 PM** to the authorized agency contact person. The Proposal due date (submission via PASSPort) is **08/23/2024 by 2:00 PM**.

This procurement is subject to participation goals for Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBEs) as required by Section 6-129 of the New York Administrative Code. The M/WBE goal for this project is 30%.

Any inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed by email, under the subject line “84124P0012-84124MBTR648” Automated Enforcement Program, to the email address of the Authorized Agency Contact, Kathy Cornwall-Wilson, at kcornwallwilson@dot.nyc.gov or through the PASSPort communication function.

Vendor Response Due Date and Time: **Friday, August 23, 2024, by 2:00 PM**

BRONX, JEROME GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (JGHBID), SPONSORED CONTENT

Piquitos de Azucar

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Piquitos de Azucar, located at 333 East Gun Hill Road, opened just nine months ago and has been serving the Norwood community in the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District with fresh Dominican delicacies ever since. Piquitos de Azucar is run by Cinthia and her husband. Cinthia learned to bake and decorate through FaceTime calls in 2020 when she was introduced to a friend who lived in Ohio who had been baking for over 30 years.

Cinthia had a lot of support from her family friends as she initially learned to bake. She used to walk around the neighborhood while pushing a shopping cart filled with pastries she had baked. The initial reception from customers was so strong and supportive that she decided to open a storefront for Piquitos de Azucar.

"I was a little hesitant at first to open the store, but my husband told me. 'If you get the opportunity, I'm into it,' and we decided to just do it," said Cinthia. "A lot of people tell me that they are very proud. They ask me if I ever imagined this, and I tell them, 'No, I never imagined this.'"

Piquitos de Azucar makes cakes for weddings, parties, birthdays, and special requests. They also have ice cream, flan, and numerous other pastries. Piquitos de Azucar translates to "small bites of sugar."

Everything is freshly made, and Cinthia says she hopes to give everyone a taste of the Dominican Republic.

"When people taste anything here, I want them to feel like they are in the Dominican Republic. A lot of the

ingredients I use are from the Dominican Republic," said Cinthia who is from the country and who came to New York at the age of 14.

Cinthia takes pride in her relationship with her customers, calling it her favorite part of running her own bakery. She says she loves to put smiles on faces with her pastries.

"I like to make everyone happy and when people tell me that what they ate is really good, it just gives me a really good feeling," she said.

Piquitos de Azucar is open 7 days a week from Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come in today for a sweet treat!

Photos by Ariel Pacheco

CINTHIA DECORATES A cake below at Piquitos de Azucar on July 17, 2024.

PIQUITOS DE AZUCAR storefront is seen at right on July 17, 2024.



“Operation Padlock” in Action in Norwood

By DAVID GREENE

Two businesses with shady pasts located on East 204th Street in Norwood reopened to cash in on the legalization of marijuana. However, both stores appear to have been targeted by law enforcement as part of the new “Operation Padlock to Protect” mission.

Norwood News observed officers from the 52nd Precinct and the New York City Sheriff’s Office conduct a raid at the “High Cloud” store located at 357 East 204th Street on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 18.

When we later asked a man working behind the counter of the store about the incident, he alleged, “We didn’t get raided.” Asked why the police had been in the store, the man replied, “I don’t know. Get out of here, brother.”

In response to more inquiries, a man who had been sitting across the street during the apparent raid, said, “They shut it down when it got raided.” Asked why the store was still open therefore, the man replied, “They took all the stuff out of it. I don’t know what it was. Yeah, they took bags of it, a lot of white bags.”

When contacted for comment on the incident, the New York City Sheriff’s office said, “The Sheriff’s Joint Compliance Task Force conducted an inspection at 357 East 204 Street which resulted in the seizures of flavored vape products and other tobacco products. However, no cannabis or THC products were found in the location during the inspection.”

The statement concluded, “Therefore the location was not padlocked.” High Cloud is the former site of Lexa Bar where on March 27, 2021, a 38-year-old man was stabbed, and a 31-year-old female bystander was shot after a dispute.

Meanwhile, a June 20th social media post included two photos of “Rite Bud Convenience” store located at 319 East 204th



AN “OPERATION PADLOCK” inspection at High Cloud, above left, found no illegal weed, but flavored vapes were discovered and confiscated during a surprise inspection conducted by the New York City Sheriff and the NYPD on Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

PHOTO BY DAVID GREENE



A WINDOW IS seen boarded up after a suspected burglary at Rite Bud Convenience, middle, a suspected weed store, on East 204th Street in Norwood on Friday, June 24, 2024.

SUSPECTED WEED STORE, Rite Bud Convenience, above right, was shut and will soon be replaced by a Halal Deli according to this photo taken on Friday, July 5, 2024.



Street at Hull Avenue in Norwood that showed the store’s plate glass window had been broken and the store apparently ransacked. When contacted, the NYPD said they had no report of any incident at the location.

The social media user who posted the photos wrote, “The head shop on East 204 Street and Hull was just vandalized. People may have mixed feelings about head shops, but this is wrong.”

According to the website 420 Science, “a headshop is an establishment that sells cannabis lifestyle accessories but not cannabis itself. The headshop gets its name from the phrase, ‘Get your head right.’ It’s a shop for your head, and that was very evident in the early headshops. Early headshops only had a small selection of pipes.”

Having only opened a month or two

prior to the incident, workers were seen at the store on Friday, June 28. By July 15, Rite Bud’s sign had been replaced with one for, “Halal Gyro King Deli.” On Sunday, July 20, a young man renovating the shop said he knew nothing about ‘Rite Bud’ and said the new deli would open the following week.

The location is the former site of AKS Halal Deli & Grill which, in June 2016, was raided by investigators from the Manhattan District Attorney’s office who charged the owner and several family members with cheating the food stamp program out of \$296,000.

Norwood News has contacted the Manhattan DA’s office to ascertain the latest status of the food stamp case and will share any updates we receive. According to an Assignment of Leases and Rents

document filed with the City in respect of the property site, the listed assignor is 204 Holdings LLC with an address in Kings Point, NY and the listed assignee is Northfield Bank with an address of Woodbridge, NJ.

We are still trying to find out if Rite Bud and Halal Gyro King are owned by the same family who owned AKS Halal Deli in 2016. We will share any updates we receive. The owner of AKS Halal Deli is presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.

According to the New York City Sheriff, since Operation Padlock began in May, the task force has padlocked 715 locations citywide, 160 in The Bronx. During those raids, they issued over \$59 million in civil penalties and seized over \$28 million in illicit products.

Annual Bronx Anti-Bullying Resource Fair Returns

(continued from page 6)

included having more mobility around NYPCC’s services and “an NYPCC anti-bullying truck” in order to be available at any outdoor event.

According to Bloom, NYPCC “is the largest outpatient, community mental health agency in New York State.” He said they see over 25,000 clients per year, and regularly train mental health care professionals like therapists and school counselors. Meanwhile, Klein said most of the counselors (85%) are bicultural and bilingual to address the needs of the wider community more thoroughly.

The Youth Advocacy Corps (YAC), an organization which launched in 2015 and is also part of the Bronx Anti-Bullying Coalition, also partners with NYPCC with its work. YAC promotes youth-led workshops on anti-bullying, according

to Jenny de la Cruz, the YAC’s program director.

“Our youth are the ones that are leading the workshops, so when we reach out to the schools, we let them know that it’s all youth led,” she said. “It makes a bigger impact because young people are more likely to talk to other young people about the things that are going on, so we’re able to recognize different trends.”

YAC also offers mental health and wellness programs for those who are unable to access this care due to financial burdens, but their main mission is centered around the younger generation.

“We are a youth led organization where we try to empower our young people by giving them advocacy and public speaking skills, and to be able to go into the communities and make change,” said de la Cruz. “We’re a part of the coali-

tion because we also are big advocates of mental health. We provide mental health workshops in schools, and bullying is a topic that is in high demand for school teachers and staff.”

She said the workshops teach others how to recognize signs of bullying and encourage students to speak up, while also providing resources for those who want to talk. YAC is also a multilingual service, offering resources in both Spanish and English, as well as aiding migrants in all five boroughs.

To celebrate NYPCC’s 50th anniversary, NYC Council and Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson presented the organization and Klein with certificates, thanking them for their work, dedication, and outreach in The Bronx.

After a recent expansion, which saw other similar events being held in Brook-

lyn, NYPCC officials said they also hope to expand into Queens, where they said they recently opened a clinic, and where they hope one day to also hold annual fairs, like the ones held in The Bronx.

Bloom said, “I think one of the things we want to do is cultivate our Queens presence and let people know [about NYPCC services]. For instance, I went to some of the school districts in that area, near Jackson Heights, and they were ecstatic because there’s not many places that they can refer to with our reputation of quality and evidence-based treatments.”

The event continued with music, a rock-climbing attraction run by the NYPD, a raffle for free goodie bags, and games. At the end of the event, LeBron encouraged children, who were able, to participate in a relay race that promoted both teamwork and offering a helping hand.

BRONX, JEROME GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (JGHBID), SPONSORED CONTENT

Fun Finds Shop

By **ARIEL PACHECO**

Fun Finds Shop, located at 256 East Gun Hill Road, is the neighborhood’s go-to store for custom items like T-shirts, hats, tumblers, keychains, handbags, candles, gift baskets, party favors, and more. The family business is run by Joselyn Rodriguez and Marlon Arango, a young couple with a passion for creating unique and personalized gifts.

Fun Finds Shop opened in 2020, and it also has an online bakery where customers can order custom cakes, cupcakes, and cookies. All items in the physical store and available via the online bakery can be customized with logos, photos, characters, cartoons, and more.

Joselyn’s passion for creating custom items originally began at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when she wanted a hobby to help clear her head during a difficult time. Marlon then bought her a machine that allowed her to experiment and learn. She was reluctant and nervous at first but started taking classes to improve her skills and now uses them to bring joy to others.

“It was overwhelming at first learning how to do everything,” said Joselyn. “Now I get to bring a smile on people’s faces and give a piece of us to everybody’s homes.”

Joselyn says she connects with customers to gain a better understanding of their preferences, and this allows her to tailor her creations precisely to their desires and ensure that each item meets their expectations.

“She talks to people and then once she has that understanding, she can give them a little extra,” said Marlon. “She just connects to that and goes above and beyond to give people what they want.”

Joselyn and Marlon are also both professional balloon



designers, which Marlon says, “allows us to take the experience of balloons to another level.” This adds another layer of fun and creativity to their designs, creating memorable experiences for any special occasion.

Visit Fun Finds Shop today to create the perfect personalized items. Fun Finds Shop is open from Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., in the heart of the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District. To order online or by phone, visit their store’s Instagram page @e.jjdelight or call (347) 597-3175.



Photos courtesy of Joselyn Rodriguez

FUN FINDS SHOP storefront, seen top left on July 19, 2024.

CUSTOM-MADE ITEMS ARE seen in middle photo at Fun Finds Shop on July 19, 2024.

THE INTERIOR OF Fun Finds Shop as seen in the bottom photo on July 19, 2024.

A CUSTOM-MADE BIRTHDAY cake in the above

Photo by Ariel Pacheco
JOSELYN RODRIGUEZ AND Marlon Arango seen in the top right photo in Fun Finds Shop on July 19, 2024.



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Public and Community Meetings

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

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

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

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

Norwood's Nicky's to Reopen Sal's Pizzeria in September

By DAVID GREENE

Longtime residents and visitors to Norwood were surprised to see the iron roll-down gate permanently shut at the popular Sal's Pizzeria on Bainbridge Avenue, when the business quietly closed after more than 40 years in the community.

However, *Norwood News* has learned that the owner of the also popular Nicky's Coffee Shop located at 3140 Bainbridge Avenue, has taken over the pizzeria site and plans to reopen the pizza shop on Sept. 1.

Sal's closure was first noticed on Monday, July 15, when the rolling gate was down and a notice in Spanish affixed to it informed customers of the drink and ice cream business that had shared a small space inside the restaurant had moved to 1 East Gun Hill Road by Jerome Avenue.

On Tuesday, July 24, *Norwood News* spoke briefly to Nicky's co-owner George, who confirmed, "We took it over, yes." George continued, "Yeah, it's going to be a pizza shop, the same, a pizza restaurant." Asked when they planned to open, George replied, "We'll we're cleaning up basically. We're hoping for September 1st."

Asked if customers could expect the same high-quality standards customers say they get at Nicky's, George said, "That's the point. That's why we're delaying it. We've got to clean it up. Yup, we're going to do our best there."

We asked George if the other small business which sold drinks and ice cream would return to Bainbridge Avenue once the store reopened, George said, "No, no, they relocated to (East) Gun Hill

Road and Jerome."

One worker from the area said the original owner, Sal, sold the business in 2008. Longtime residents recall that Sal's Pizzeria first opened on East 206th Street in the mid-1980s, before moving around the corner to its current location at 3167 Bainbridge Avenue.

Longtime Norwood resident Chris Perkins had been unaware of Sal's departure. Nonetheless, he said, "I noticed the change. They put a lot more Spanish food on the menu, which I thought was good, but it kind of lost the pizza shop flavor, but it was a much better menu."

Asked for his thoughts about Nicky's taking over Sal's, Perkins said, "I hope they maintain the quality, even though I really haven't eaten there much in years."



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Bedford Park Gets A Clean Up

(continued from page 1)

collected by NYC Department of Sanitation, which works closely with the Sanitation Foundation to maintain the City's cleanliness.

Speaking to *Norwood News* on the day, Pam Harris, president of the Sanitation Foundation, said, "Everybody has a part to play in keeping the city clean, and so these clean-ups are a way for people to get involved, because it's just two hours.

She added, "And I have to say that after you finish a clean-up, you have [figuratively] 'trash goggles' on; you will forever see New York City differently.

You will forever pick up something from the street and put it in the garbage... It changes your perspective of New York City."

Unsightly piles and scatterings of trash often seen across Bronx parks and streets have long been an eyesore for residents, many of whom have shared their frustration with the problem in the past. This is especially true after big holidays like the Fourth of July, but piles of trash have also long been seen regularly along Webster Avenue by Woodlawn Cemetery and between parked vehicles and the walls of Reservoir Oval East in nearby Norwood. While nobody begrudges anyone a good time, what annoys most residents is when people litter or don't clean up after themselves.

Posting a photo of an abandoned bunch of balloons seemingly stuck in a tree on the Facebook group, Future of Mosholu Parkland (FOMP), FOMP executive director Elizabeth Quaranta recently said, "Balloon[s] don't belong up on a tree and actually, balloons don't belong anywhere. They are made out of plastic. They're no good for the environment and I've picked up thousands of them off the ground when they come down."

She added, "They're also not good for wildlife. I don't understand why people need to celebrate with balloons. Save your money and get paper fans. Keep the balloons out of your life."

Norwood News editor, Sile Moloney, recently joined Quaranta in a separate clean-up effort along Mosholu Parkway in Bedford Park in July, and there were many tiny pieces of plastic, balloon remnants, broken glass, and other potentially dangerous and hazardous items left there by park goers.

Earlier trash pick-up times by DSNY, rat academy training sessions for residents, and new rules around compost disposal and trash bins for local businesses have all helped somewhat with street cleanliness and curbing rat sightings, but park trash containers often still seem to be overflowing, especially at the weekends, creating a depressing atmosphere.

Back at Bedford Park, we asked Harris about the logistics of the clean-up efforts. "We want to keep everybody super, super safe," she said. "So, we come, we scout this route beforehand. Logistically, we make sure that there's a big

meeting place that's nice and safe and shady. We try to be near public transportation so there's a 4 train and a B train there. We carefully plot out the routes to make sure that they're safe, they're dirty, they need help, and we look at how many people sign up."

She continued, "So, if we have 125 people sign up, we'll pick three or four routes. We'll scout them before we walk the routes, and make sure that it'll take enough time. On this route, because it's on a Friday, we have a lot of kids, a lot of camps, a lot of youth programs, and we staff up because we want to make sure those kids are as safe as possible."

Other staff members and volunteers with the Sanitation Foundation have their own roles to play, aside from accompanying and guiding youth groups along their clean-up routes. This includes Johari James, who works closely with the youth groups to get them involved in their local communities and who has been participating in the annual clean-up events for three years, including in Brooklyn.

"Through doing the mentorship with youth, and just doing community activities and engagement, I got connected with the Sanitation Foundation and from there, started working with them in the volunteer program," James said. "[It] escalated into being in clean-ups with them, I got work in the schools doing waste audits, litter clean-ups, and a lot of meetings in public schools."

James said part of the key to getting youth involved was about incentivizing them, and not just with free Yankee Stadium tickets. "If you've got a couple of dollars, if you have a barbecue, if you have Yankee tickets, if you have something to offer the young people as a reward, to show them that doing what they're supposed to be doing is a good thing..." he said before trailing off.

Aside from the incentivization for the clean-up, Bronx residents, and some former Bronx residents, find that they enjoy giving back to the community that raised and housed them. This is true of Kateri Gonzalez, who now lives in New Jersey with her husband and kids, and who was accompanied by her husband and some of her kids on the day. She said she was raised in The Bronx.

"This is my home," she said. "I was born and raised in New York City. I was born in Mount Sinai, and I grew up a die-hard Yankee fan." Of the many benefits she sees in participating in clean-up events, she said, "It's two things: you're having a family activity, you're teaching your kids how to give back, and then you're also giving back to the community, helping people out, and then thirdly, you're winning because you're getting an incentive."

Others feel the same way, like Julio Leonor, a Bronx resident, and Eduardo Rosa, a Bedford Park resident and student at Lehman College, who are veterans of the annual clean-up series.

Leonor has been volunteering for three years now, after finding out about



Photo by Miriam Quiñones

VOLUNTEERS PICK UP trash in Bedford Park on July 19, 2024, as part of a series of ongoing summer clean-up events held across The Bronx organized by the Sanitation Foundation in conjunction with the New York Yankees, the Office of the Bronx Borough President, NYC Department of Sanitation, NYC Service and Amazon.

the clean-up series via email. He said they have taken him to several different Bronx neighborhoods to carry out the work. "I was [living] here [in 1976]," he said. "I moved to the Yankee Stadium area, and then I moved around but it's always... Bronx is always home."

Once the two hours were up, volunteers were able to exchange their gloves for a Yankees game ticket, which also doubled as a voucher for a free, sweet treat from Mr. Softee's ice cream truck that was parked on a nearby street.

According to Harris, the Sanitation Foundation also has other programs and initiatives in which people can get involved, including youth education, a two-month program called "Trash Academy," which teaches individuals about a healthier and cleaner New York City, "Adopt Your Spot NYC," a program which gives participants a starter kit to keep. It might be a tree bed, a catch basin or something else to work on regularly to enhance and beautify the City.

Meanwhile, new European-style, on-street containers which will be around four cubic yards long, holding the equivalent of 28 large bags of trash are due to be rolled out across the City in 2025, DSNY officials said. The containers will be lifted by a fleet of automated side-loading trucks, with the aim of reducing street trash left unattended for several hours. DSNY unveiled one of the new trucks in February, the first of its kind in North America.

Data in April showed the City's so-called "Trash Revolution" is working, with rat sightings reported to 311 declining in 11 of the 12 months year over year since the revolution began, according to DSNY. The total decrease across the covered period was 6.4%, and 14.3% in the City's Rat Mitigation Zones. DSNY manages 44 million pounds of trash per day in New York City, officials said.

On May 23, New York City Council

passed a new law that gives DSNY the authority to target the worst repeat violators of rules regulating the cleanliness of public space outside commercial properties. NYC Sanitation Commissioner Jessica Tisch said at the time, "New Yorkers are demanding clean streets, and the Adams Administration is delivering - yet a few chronic bad actors have kept our streets dirty and the rats well fed. A small number of commercial property owners have brazenly broken the basic cleanliness rules over and over again with impunity, including three dozen locations that were fined FIFTY OR MORE TIMES in 2023."

The Sanitation Foundation said, in addition to its other partners, it was also thankful for the support of NYC Service and Amazon with its summer clean-up efforts. The Bedford Park event was the fourth Bronx clean-up event of the ongoing boroughwide summer series, with Mott Haven's clean-up having taken place the week before. The first clean-up event took place on June 22 and the Yankee Stadium area clean-up takes place on Aug. 2. Community members and others interested in participating can sign up on the website, sanitationfoundation.org.

Nearly all the Bedford Park day's participants expressed a desire to see change and to see The Bronx cleaner and healthier. This was especially since, as James alleged, The Bronx accumulates the most trash.

"In all of the boroughs, quality of life has plummeted," she said. "This is like a band aid in a sense, but it's a band aid that sends a message that people can say, 'Hey! Listen, I can take an hour out of my day; I can clean my block.' Now, once it's clean, what do we do after that?"

**Sile Moloney contributed to this story.*

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Police Misconduct - **\$28,000,000** • Elevator Accident - **\$1,400,000**
Car Accident - **\$1,600,000** • Slip & Fall Accident - **\$2,650,000**

If You Can't Come to Us...We'll Come to You

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