

First SAGE center opens in boro

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Bronx lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender seniors will now have a place to go for both camaraderie and assistance.

The national organization Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders celebrated the opening of its first full-time senior center in the Bronx on Wednesday, January 14.

The opening was part of a \$1.5 million initiative in 2014 to create full-time SAGE centers across the city, funded by the city council and opened with support from the NYC Department for the Aging.

A Staten Island center opened in December, as well as an expanded center in Harlem. There is also currently centers in both midtown Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The initiative to bring SAGE centers to more New Yorkers was spearheaded by Councilman Ritchie Torres. The new center at Union Community Health Center in Fordham falls within his district.

At the grand opening ceremony of the SAGE Center Bronx, attended by a number of city councilmembers including Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Torres called the event an emotional moment.

"This has tremendous meaning for me as a gay man," he said.

When SAGE approached him, Torres said he was upset to learn that while there are an estimated 100,000 LGBT seniors in the city, there was only one full-time LGBT senior center.

"It's hard to imagine a population that is more invisible, and more tragically under-served than LGBT elders," said Torres.

It was important to the councilman to help create more safe-

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CONFUSION OVER SAFER JUNCTION

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The intersection of East Tremont Avenue at Silver and Overing streets recently received a makeover, but the improvements have caused some confusion for drivers.

Where there was previously a wide-open intersection that was hazardous to drivers and pedestrians, there are now numerous dividers breaking up the intersection and directing traffic flow.

Vehicles travelling south on Silver Street, can no longer make a left turn on to Tremont Avenue.

The changes, completed in November, came after local merchants advocated for improvements to the confusing location.

One of those merchants was Juan Clark of Clark & Sons Signs. His shop has sat at the corner of

Overing Street and Tremont Avenue for the past 14 years, and he said he used to see four or five accidents in front of his shop annually, and he also felt unsafe crossing the street.

"I'd been trying to get this intersection fixed for a long time," said Clarke. "It was treacherous."

Those accidents took a particularly scary turn when in July 2012, a car drove through the front of his shop during the night.

Since the barriers went up and the traffic calming measures were implemented, Clarke said he no longer hears the sound of screeching tires like he often did before.

"From what I've seen, it's working," said Clarke. "It's 100 percent for the better."

For others, the changes at the

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Bingo To Benefit Calvary

Ann Graney with her winning Bingo cards at Throggs Neck Memorial Unit #1456's annual Bingo benefit for Calvary Hospital on Sunday, January 18.

CB 10 endorses Hart Island jurisdiction plan

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Community Board 10 is supporting an effort calling for the transfer Hart Island, home to the city's Potter's Field, to the Parks Department.

The board endorsed two NYC Council bills sponsored primarily by Queens Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley that would see Hart Island, located just off the coast of City Island in Long Island Sound,

transferred to the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation from the Department of Correction.

One of the bills calls for funding for a ferry service between City Island and Hart Island that would open the island to the public.

The board's vote on Thursday, January 15 was unanimous with one abstention, though several

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Pop-up coffee shop to leave 55 Bruckner Blvd.

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

A trial business in the south Bronx will be closing down its current location at the end of the month.

The Mix Cafe, a pop-up coffee shop located in Mott Haven, will be leaving 55 Bruckner Boulevard at the end of the month, after just five weeks of operation.

Originally opened as a three-day experiment at nearby 127 Lincoln Avenue in April 2014, the coffee shop was successful in the little time that it operated there, receiving upwards of 75 customers daily while developing its business model.

This is typical of pop-up coffee shops, which move in and out of locations frequently.

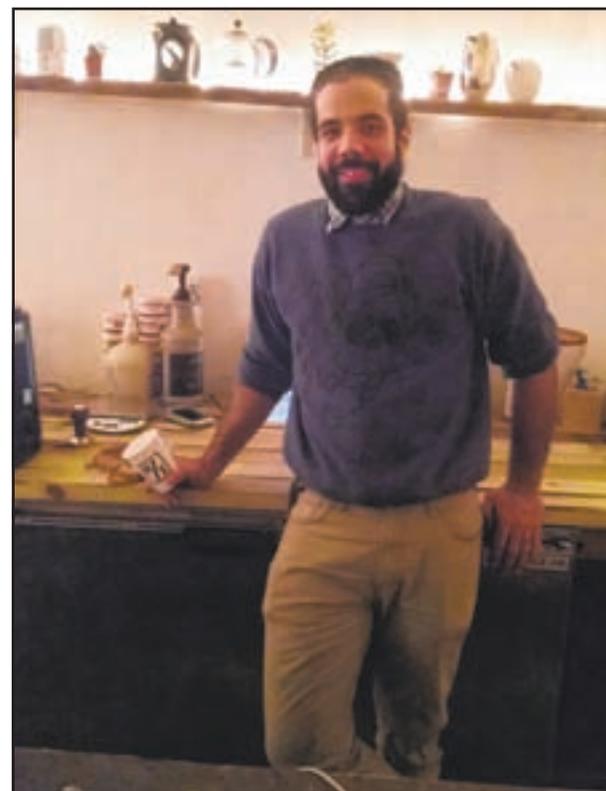
The Mix Cafe returned to Mott Haven in early December, relocating the shop just blocks away to its current space, on the ground floor of a three story, mixed-use building that was completed in August 2014 by Alexander Ave Lofts LLC.

Joshua Weissman, who is the building's landlord, initially reached out to the Mix Cafe to occupy the ground floor retail space of the building, free of charge, while he sought a permanent tenant.

The pop-up shop, which seated 20 to 25 people, hosted a holiday market in mid-December to introduce themselves to the area and its residents, on a stretch of Bruckner Boulevard that includes various restaurants and bars.

Unfortunately, the Mix Cafe's new location attracted less customers than it's first site, due to the area's limited pedestrian foot traffic in the winter.

"These two blocks are very isolated, especially during this time of the year," said Peter Medina, co-owner of the Mix Cafe. "We had a lot



Co-owner of the Mix Cafe Peter Medina plans to leave Mott Haven by the end of January, and hopes the business 'pop-ups' back in the area in the near future. Steven Goodstein / Community News Group

of customers at the old location, but because the holidays are over and it's still winter, the number of our customers has decreased significantly - even though we relocated just a few blocks away."

The Mix Cafe's other problem with this location was its size - 2,000 square feet - way too much space for the pop-up store to operate.

According to its owners, the Mix Cafe will look for a 450 to 600 square foot space, almost a third of the space, once it leaves its current location.

As a result, the Mix Cafe decided that it will close to the public by the end of the month, while Weissman seeks another tenant.

"I want them to keep the coffee shop open," said Weissman, "However, I am glad that they were able to operate here and I hope that they find another space in the

neighborhood suitable for them to operate, because this area lacks and needs a coffee shop like this one."

The Mix Cafe thanked the building's owner for the opportunity it was offered.

"Joshua (Weissman) was very generous to let us operate our business here, and we are very grateful that an opportunity like this was given to us," said Vernicia Colon, co-owner of the Mix Cafe. "This was a positive experience, as it gave us a chance to test our products in a developing neighborhood of the Bronx."

If you're in Mott Haven from now until January 31, take a trip to the Mix Cafe, which is open Monday thru Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Medina recommends customers try their espresso, cortado or chai latte.

Seniors fleeced by Greendot scammers

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

The 45th Precinct has seen an uptick this year in 'Greendot' scams, which often targets seniors.

One Throggs Neck senior found herself the victim of the scam just before Thanksgiving.

"I never thought it would happen to me," said Carmela Ianiello.

Ianiello had received a call from someone claiming to be one of her grandsons. He said he had gone with a friend to the Dominican Republic on a last minute trip and had gotten in a car accident the night before, breaking his nose.

"His voice sounded just like him," said Ianiello.

A 'policeman' then got on the phone, and explained her grandson would need to appear before a judge with \$3,000.

After offering up his name and badge number, he told her to go buy GreenDot MoneyPak prepaid debit cards for that amount, and come back and read him the numbers on the back of the card to get the money.

He told her not to tell anyone, and she didn't want to worry her family about her grandson's condition.

She withdrew the cash and bought the cards at a local drugstore, and provided the policeman with the cards' numbers. Later that day, the 'policeman' called back

and said her grandson had gone before the judge and now had to pay a fine of \$2,500 additionally.

When she went to the bank to withdraw the second amount, two employees who knew her as a long-time customer inquired about the need for the large sum of cash.

When she started to explain the situation, they stopped her and told her it was a scam, and helped her contact her grandson at work.

Ianiello said she was extremely upset when she realized she had been scammed, but was grateful for the bank employees who stopped her from losing even more money.

She had believed the callers because they triggered an emotional response about her grandson and spoke in a very convincing manner.

Although Ianiello filed a report with the 45th Precinct, she understood she wouldn't see that \$3,000 again, and had to cancel her vacation plans this winter.

"I'm never going to get my money back," said Ianiello. "That's a very big hardship for me."

Ianiello had never heard of Greendot cards or the scam before, and she hopes other people become aware of the issue and avoid her fate.

The 45th Precinct has seen an increase

in overall reported scams this year. These reports were up 300 percent in 2014, said Captain James McGeown, with 28 cases reported year compared to 7 in 2013.

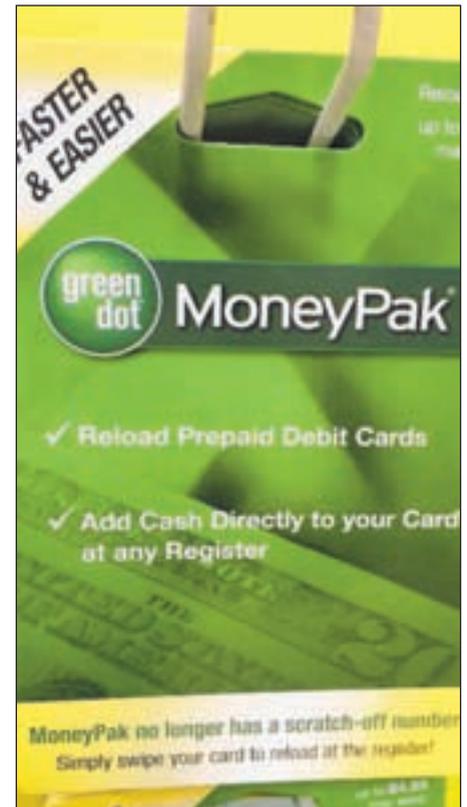
Cases like Ianiello's are not uncommon, said Community Affairs officer Anne Marie Morrison. The scammers often prey on seniors and tap into their emotions by convincing them that family members, especially grandchildren, have been in accidents, are in jail, or have been kidnapped.

If you get a call like that, Morrison recommends telling them you'll call back, and then reach out to your family members. Be especially wary when callers tell you not to tell anyone about the situation.

Another guise that scammers use is pretending to be from Con Edison calling about an electric bill, said Morrison. These scams can target businesses who rely on refrigeration. Other scams may target immigrants who fear legal repercussions.

While the GreenDot MoneyPak cards are often associated with these scams, other brands of prepaid debit cards are used as well, said Morrison.

The scammers access the money through the number on the back of the card, and then transfer it to another prepaid card, neither of which are linked to any accounts. This makes the money nearly impossible to trace or recover.



Prepaid debit cards are sometimes used by telephone scammers.

Community News Group / Jaime Williams

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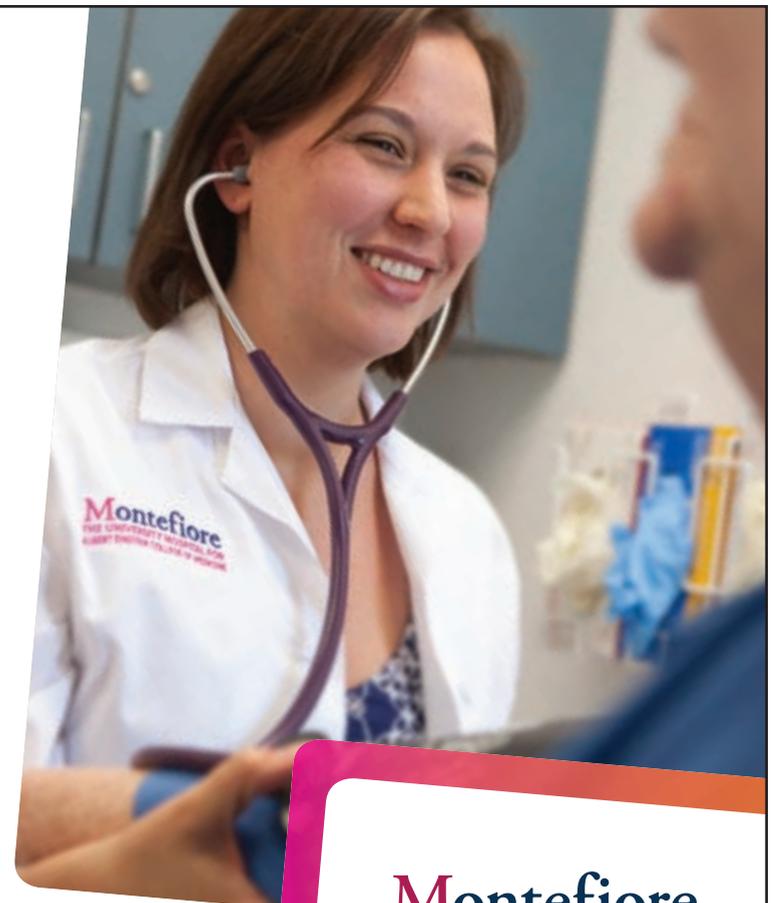
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Confusion over safer intersection at Westchester Square

From Page 1

intersection is taking some getting used to.

A few merchants are frustrated that you can no longer turn left on Tremont Avenue from Silver, said Lisa Sorin of the Westchester Square Business Improvement District.

"It's a matter of who you speak to," she said.

The concern has been raised that the changes make businesses on the two blocks east of the intersection, before Williamsbridge Road, less accessible.

There is currently a sign

at Williamsbridge Road and Silver Street instructing drivers that there is no left turn from Silver, but Sorin said there needs to be more signage until people adjust to the new traffic pattern.

The BID will continue to work with the Department of Transportation to get the additional signage, and will monitor the changes' effect on business.

"Right now there's not a major impact," said Sorin. "It's mostly inconvenience."

The benefits of a safer intersection far outweigh the

few challenges, said Sorin, and she has received positive feedback since the construction was completed.

Shoppers who would get off the bus in the heart of The Square can now get off further up Tremont—closer to their shops—because they feel safe crossing the street.

The new design of the intersection minimizes the potential for accidents for both drivers and pedestrians.

"Overall, it's a huge positive for The Square," said Sorin.



(Right) Traffic calming measures were recently implemented at the intersection of Silver Street and East Tremont Avenue. Left turns onto East Tremont Avenue from Silver Street are no longer permitted.

Community News Group / Jaime Williams

First SAGE center celebrates grand opening in the borough

From Page 1

spaces for LGBT seniors, where they can be themselves without fear.

"They no longer have to age alone," said Torres.

The goal of the center is to provide Bronx LGBT seniors with a place for both socializing and support where there previously was none, said SAGE Center Bronx site manager Jose Collazo.

"They don't have the opportunity to commune with each other," he said.

The center will offer a calendar full of fun activities including games, crafts, and movies, among other activities that the seniors can suggest. A hot lunch will be also provided each day.

In addition, there will be exercise classes and nutrition workshops, and the staff can provide help with navigating various government benefits.

"They can get vital information they need so they can lead an active and healthy life," said Collazo.

SAGE also provides a network of resources, such as providing recommendations for gay-friendly health care providers or other services.

"They now have an agency that will advocate for them," said Collazo about the senior centers.

For more information about SAGE Center Bronx, visit www.sageusa.org, or call SAGE Center Bronx at (718) 220-2020.



The ribbon cutting of the new SAGE Center Bronx. (l-r): Councilman Daniel Dromm, Deputy Commissioner for the Department for the Aging Caryn Resnick, Bronx LGBT Community Liaison Lewis Goldstein, Councilman Ritchie Torres, Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Councilwoman Annabel Palma, and SAGE executive director Michael Adams.

Photo courtesy of SAGEUSA



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Vigil mourns victims of Paris attacks

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Dozens of local residents and community leaders gathered on Pelham Parkway last week to remember those who died in the recent Paris terrorist attacks.

On January 7, terrorists attacked the office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, killing 12. The suspects and affiliates later took hostages in a printing plant and a Jewish grocery store, where an additional four were killed.

Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj organized the interfaith vigil on Friday, January 19 to honor the victims.

"We are gathered here today to mourn and pray for peace," said Gjonaj.

After the attacks, three million Parisians and supporters responded by peacefully assembling in the streets, said Rabbi Shmuel Zuckerman of the Young Israel on Pelham Parkway.

"We want to echo that today," he said at the vigil.

Father Salvatore DeStefano

of St. Clare's of Assisi extended condolences on behalf of the neighborhood's Catholic community, and thanked the community for coming together.

"Times of tragedy bring unity," said Fr. DeStefano.

Although the terrorists called themselves Muslim, their values are not those of the true religion, said Imam Hamud Al-Silwil of the Bronx Muslim Center.

"There is no room for violence anywhere," said Al-Silwil. "We reject it completely."

"The Muslim community I know is a generous community," said Gjonaj. "They are our neighbors and friends, and they help make this neighborhood a better place."

Local teens Sana Naeem and Hira Choudhry attended the vigil with signs that called for peace, and said they wanted to provide a positive representation of their religion.

"People need to understand that Islam is literally a religion of peace," said Choudhry.

Edith Blitzer of the Pelham



The vigil on Pelham Parkway for the victims of recent terrorist attacks in Paris was attended by local residents of all ages and religions. Photo by Walter Pofeldt

Parkway Neighborhood Association, said the news of the attacks on the Jewish community and others in Paris was devastating.

"These are all human be-

ings, we have the same blood," said Blitzer.

In trying times, it's important for members of the community to stand as one, she said.

Another member of the PPNA, Steven Glosner, agreed.

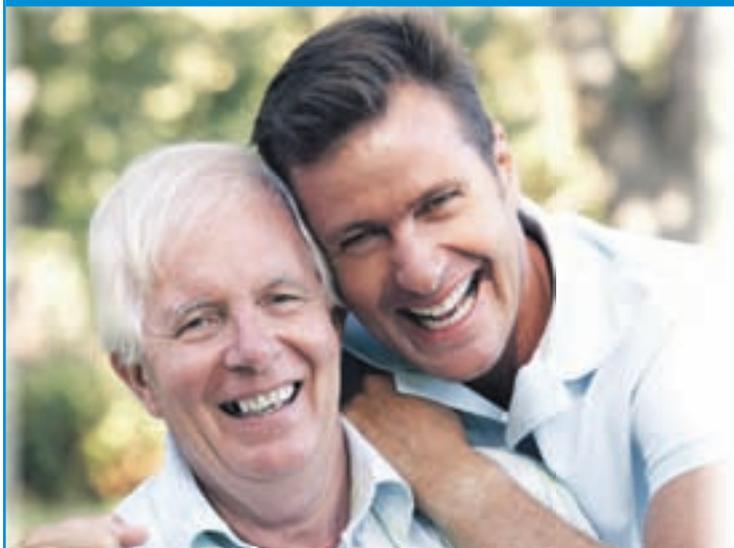
"It's good for the community—all races, religions and creeds—to come together."

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Councilmen fund Morris Park Avenue cleanup

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Call them the 'clean team.'

Councilman Ritchie Torres and Councilman James Vacca, whose adjoining districts contain portions of Morris Park and Van Nest, have banded together to bring The Doe Fund's Ready, Willing, and Able work crews to clean Morris Park Avenue from East 180 Street to Williamsbridge Road.

The joint effort was announced at a press conference at the East 180th Street IRT #2 and #5 train station on Friday, January 16 that included the councilmen, Doe Fund founder and president George McDonald, Community Board 6 district manager Irvine Galarza, Community Board 11 chairman Tony Vitaliano, and leaders from the Morris Park Community Association and Van Nest Neighborhood Association.

The cleanliness of a neighborhood is a reflection of its character, and if we fail to keep our commercial corridors and residential streets clean, it sends a message that we do not care, said Torres.

"Local residents and entrepreneurs deserve clean, livable conditions where their families and businesses can thrive," said Torres. "I am proud that we were able to secure funding to partner with the Doe Fund to bring additional sanitation services to Van Nest and Morris Park."

Torres spoke first and then introduced Vacca, who he said Vacca was called 'Mr.



Councilman Ritchie Torres (c) and Councilman James Vacca held a press conference at the IRT 2 and 5 180th Street station on Friday, January 16 to announce that the Doe Fund will help keep Morris Park Avenue clean.
Community News Group / Photo by Patrick Rocchio

Clean.' in a 1994 news article. Before becoming a councilman, Torres worked as a Vacca aide.

Vacca stressed that clean streets are a community effort, adding that he is often distressed when he sees someone throw a wrapper on the ground. He called having the Doe Fund cleaning crews on the street a "win-win."

"The cleanliness of our streets speaks

to how residents and visitors view the community," said Vacca. "I was able to allocate money this year so that street cleaners from The Doe Fund could join the effort to keep our streets litter free. If you see Doe Fund workers sweeping or bagging garbage, let it be a reminder that we all must do our part to keep the community clean."

Both councilmen allocated \$68,000 each for the Doe Fund crews, and a spokesman

for Councilman Torres said that about a dozen other council members also brought the program to their district.

Tony Signorile, president of the Morris Park Community Association, stressed that having clean streets can attract new residents and businesses; Bob Nolan of the VNNA said that having cleaner streets is one of several developments in the community including the opening of a new public school in the fall; and Bernadette Ferrara, also of VNNA, said she stops to thank the workcrews for helping keep Van Nest clean.

The Doe Fund provides work opportunities to people who were formerly homeless.

One of the Ready, Willing, and Able cleaners working on the six-days-a-week cleanup, is Eugene Samuels, who said he was assigned to remove litter and debris on Morris Park Avenue from the train station at East 180th Street to Holland Avenue.

"I started with Doe in October, and as soon as I got here, I started to feel better," he said. "People are coming off the train saying 'you are doing a great job' and 'keep up the good work.'"

More blocks along East 180th Street from Morris Park Avenue leading to Boston Road, that are only in Torres' district only, are also being cleaned. In total, 29 blocks total will be street cleaned by the 'men in blue,' as the crews are called because of their blue work-suits.

Community School District 11 launches mobile app

BY JAIME WILLIAMS

Parents in Community School District 11 can now have more information about their child's school right at their fingertips.

The district superintendent, Maria Lopez, just launched a mobile application to bring school communication to parents' smartphones.

The app, designed by WhizFish Innovations and available for both Apple and Android phones and tablets, is the first district-wide app implemented in the New York City Department of Education.

Features include contact information for schools and administrators who can be reached email or a voice recording, as well as school news and schedules.

The goal of the app is to increase opportunities for communication between the administrators and parents, and get parents more engaged in the schools. Parent engagement is one of the DOE chancellor's Four Pillars of education, and Lopez agrees that when parents are involved in the schools, everyone benefits.

"I strongly believe parents are our best partners," said Lopez.

Lopez first introduced the use of an app for school communication while she was

principal of I.S. 318, and through its use saw an increase in parents reaching out to her.

"I know that it works," said Lopez.

It works because while the app offers a large amount of information about the schools, its simple to navigate.

"It's easy to handle and parent-friendly," she said.

Most importantly, it facilitates direct communication with administrators, said Lopez, including herself. She hopes to see a large number of parents downloading the application and an increase in parents connecting with her and the district's principals.

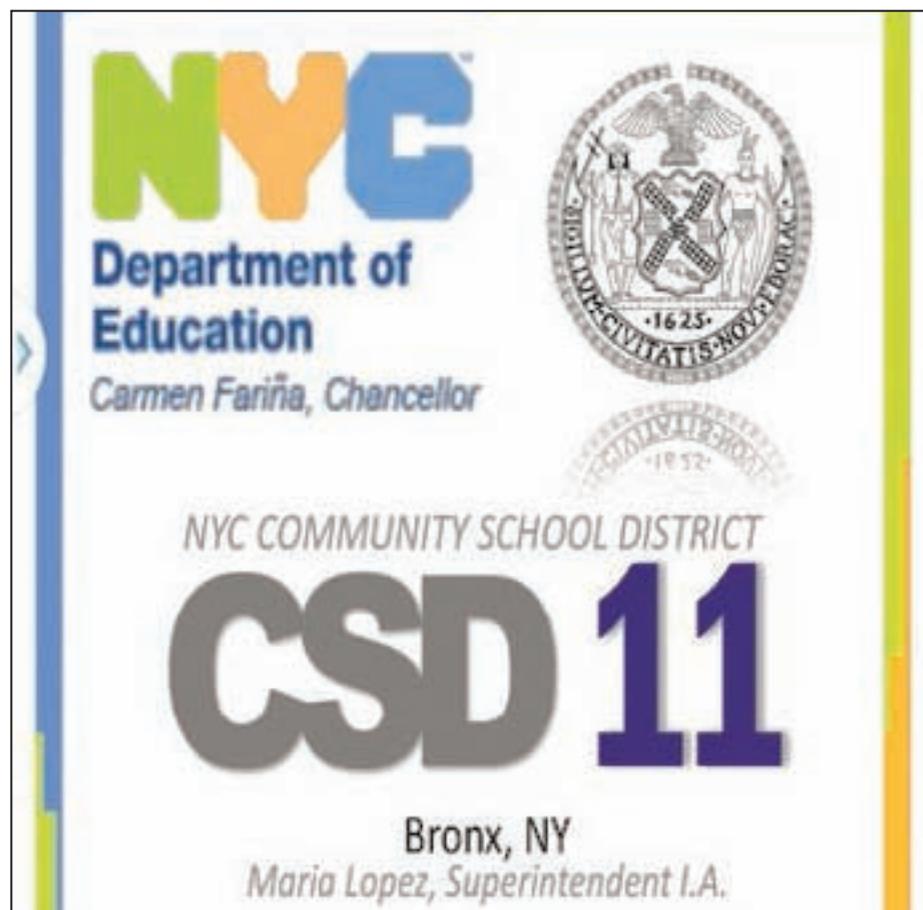
That direct line to the superintendent is something that is new for the district and is very welcomed, said Community Education Council president Pamela Johnson.

"This kind of communication we've never had before," said Johnson.

It's a great way to utilize cell phones and move school communication into the modern era, she said.

"Having a mobile app is different and creative," said Johnson. "I'm glad this CEC can be at the forefront of technology."

To download the app from iTunes or Google Play stores, search 'NYC CSD 11.'



(Right) The new mobile app for Community School District 11 will provide enhanced parent communication.
Photo courtesy of WhizFish Interactive

Lynches named St Patrick's Day parade grand marshals

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

It is time to break out your green scarf and get ready for a wave of St. Patrick's Day revellers who will walk their way down Throggs Neck's main thoroughfare.

The 17th annual Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day Parade will pay homage to community leaders Anges and Patrick Lynch, who will be the parade's grand marshals, and Honored Clergy Monsignor John Graham, when it steps off at noon on Sunday, March 15.

The parade, which runs on East Tremont Avenue from Lafayette to Harding avenues, will also honor more than 20 outstanding community residents and a former elected official, all of whom passed away recently.

"We are very proud of our honorees this year and we look forward to having our 17th annual parade," said Lynn Gerbino, a member of the parade committee. "We are anticipating a wonderful event and are so happy to recognize these honorees, who have served the community, in this way."

We are anticipating a wonderful event and are so happy to recognize these honorees, who have served the community, in this way.

Lynn Gerbino

The Lynches were married in 1959 and raised their family in Throggs Neck, according to the parade committee.

They are active members of St. Frances de Chantal Parish, and their involvement includes the church's Legion of Mary and Holy Name Society, as well as serving as eucharistic ministers and taking part in church campaigns.

Agnes has been an ardent supporter

of the Gaelic League of the Bronx and serves on the blood drive committee at her church, while Patrick has been president of the St. Frances de Chantal Nocturnal Adoration Society for over 38 years.

Monsignor John Graham is the pastor of St. Raymond Church and was named the East Bronx Vicar for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York in 2012.

The honorary grand marshals who will be posthumously honored at the parade are: Laura Casey D'Attore, Mary Finnegan, Theresa Flood, John 'Onions' Gregory, John Halpin, Bill Heaney, Thomas Hines, John 'Jack' Hepburn, Jerry Macchia, Dan Moloney, Donald McDonnell, Ron McKeegan, Edward O'Connor, Michael 'Mick' O'Donnell, Maurice 'Mickey' Powers, Madeline Provenzano, John Scully, Grace Sullivan, Kitty Tarsnane, Martin Tighe, Bill Twomey, Cornelius Wallace, Eileen Walpole and Robert Zeiss.

One of the notables in the group of honorary grand marshals is Provenzano, who served as the councilwoman for the 13th district, including Throggs Neck and many nearby communities, from 1997 to 2005.

Another of the honorary grand marshals, Twomey, was the author of several books about Bronx history and was a Bronx Times Reporter columnist. Also of note is Heaney, who was a leader at the Throggs Neck Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

All of the grand marshals and honorary grand marshals have, in their own



Monsignor John Graham, the pastor of the St. Raymond Church, has been named Honored Clergy for the 2015 Bronx St. Patrick's Parade. File Photo

way, contributed to the fabric of civic and Irish-American life in the Bronx the parade committee indicated.

"Our 2015 grand marshals, honored clergy member and honorary grand marshals represent community service, spiritual dedication and Bronx Irish pride, and we are very proud to have them lead the 2015 Throggs Neck St. Patrick's Day Parade," the committee stated.

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BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ, LATINO BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADERS VISIT ISRAEL

Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. visited Israel recently. He was heading a delegation of Latino business and civic leaders, which was hosted by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.



(Above) Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. (l) stands with United Nations soldiers monitoring the border between Israel and Syria on Monday, January 19. Borough President Diaz visited the site following an Israeli strike against Hezbollah terrorists who were planning an attack on the Golan Heights.

Photo courtesy of Borough President Diaz's office

(Right) Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Michael Miller, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, stand in front of Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights during their trip to Israel on Monday, January 19

Photo courtesy of Borough President Diaz's office



ASSEMBLYMAN BLAKE SWORN IN

Assemblyman Michael Blake of the 79th Assembly District was sworn in on Sunday, January 18 at the Mott Haven Campus in Concourse Village. A wide variety of political and business leaders attended the inauguration celebration.



Honorable Fernando Tapia of the Bronx Supreme Court swears in Assemblyman Michael Blake with his mother, Hilary Lawrence, looking on.

Photo by Patricio Robayo



CRAFT WORKSHOP AT HUNTINGTON FREE LIBRARY

Bronx Council on the Arts and the Huntington Free Library hosted a craft workshop on Saturday, January 17. The workshop at the library focused on making and decorating journals.

Above (l-r) Crystal Cleary, Daniella Donoghue, Nicole Donoghue and Barbara Donoghue enjoy the workshop.

Photo by Aracelis Batista



Cheryl and Jon Coogan show off their journals.

Photo by Aracelis Batista

Neighborhood Challenge names 2 Bronx winners

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

Any city or urban environment assures one thing - constant and rapid development. You can bet on that in New York City, thanks to many of its improvement-based groups.

On Thursday, January 15, seven winning organizations were honored by Small Business Services and New York City Economic Development Corporation at the Neighborhood Challenge Initiative at the Old Bronx Borough Courthouse, located on Third Avenue and East 161st Street alongside Brook Avenue.

The winning organizations, announced by Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer and NYCEDC president Kyle Kimball, were chosen based on those that presented the most creative and impacting economic development and revitalization projects in their communities, giving each organization a chance to obtain a grant ranging up to \$100,000.

The winners included two organizations based in the Bronx - No Longer Empty and Neighborhood Plaza Partnership, both of which are in partnerships with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation.

No Longer Empty, specifically based in Melrose and Morrisania, collaborates with local organizations, residents, civic leaders and businesses to ensure rel-



The winning organizations were honored at the Neighborhood Challenge Initiative at the old Bronx Borough Courthouse on Thursday, January 15. Photo courtesy of Small Business Services

evance and promote cultural vibrancy, publicly engaging with contemporary art through community-responsive exhibitions and education programs that revitalize underutilized properties.

The organization plans to open the vacant Old Bronx Borough Courthouse up to the community as early as this coming April, and was granted \$60,000 by Neighborhood Challenge to do so, as it awaits a permanent tenants.

“Our organization brings urban planning and arts together at vacant properties such as this one,” said Naomi Hersson-Ringskog, executive director of No Longer Empty.

“For this organization, Neighborhood Challenge is an exciting opportunity to be working with partners to revive this beautiful historical building and to engage with local residents and citywide visitors in the south Bronx.”

Neighborhood Plaza Partnership, the other Bronx winner, specifically based in Mott Haven, is in the process of working on a project called ‘Pop-Up Concession Revenues’ at Roberto Clemente Plaza, located on East 149th Street and Third Avenue.

This project will develop a ‘best practice’ for concessions-based revenue generation in public plazas.

NPP was granted \$100,000 by Neighborhood Challenge.

“Tremendous opportunities are unfolding in the Bronx, and at SoBro, we are honored and proud to be the recipient of resources that allow us to be an agent for change,” said Jamila Diaz, director of Industrial & Commercial Business Services for SoBro.

The Neighborhood Challenge, currently in its third year, is a competitive grant initiative designed to encourage innovation and service delivery improvements from business improvement districts, community-based organizations and community-based development organizations that will support small businesses, generate economic activity and attract more jobs and investments to local commercial corridors.

Since launching in 2012, Neighborhood Challenge has awarded nearly \$1.1 million in grants to organizations for innovative projects across all of NYC’s five boroughs.

NOTABLE PASSINGS

Bronx businessman Herb Sedler dies

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A Port Morris businessman has been laid to rest, leaving behind his activist spirit that will be missed.

Herbert Sedler, the founder of Paper Enterprises, Inc., a Port Morris-based supplier of paper products to the food services industry, died recently, the company announced. He was 84.

Sedler was active in communities throughout the Bronx, expanding his influence beyond Port Morris.

Today the company has a staff of 160, including 30 salespeople, and a fleet of 25 trucks.

He was a board member of the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBro) and a member and major supporter of the New York Tennis Club in Throggs Neck.

The board of directors of the

New York Tennis Club released a statement about Sedler’s devotion to the organization for decades.

“We at the New York Tennis Club were terribly saddened by the death of our longtime member and friend, Herb Sedler; in fact, many attended his funeral and, in the days following, paid condolence calls to his wife and family in tribute to him, sharing warm stories and memories,” the statement read.

“When Herb was on the board of directors of our club, he worked tirelessly as publicity chairperson to attract new members and was indeed successful at that endeavor,” the statement continued. “As an avid tennis player, he enjoyed playing doubles and mixed doubles as well as attending our social and competitive round-robins. Together with his lovely wife, Geri, Herb also brought good cheer to all

our holiday parties, and he will be sorely missed by all at the club.”

Former SoBro senior vice-president Neil Pariser recalled that as one of the organization’s board members, Sedler served on the development and fiscal committees.

“Herb was a very engaged individual,” said Pariser. “He was running a business, but he always took the time to work at the community level as well.”

Pariser recollected that Sedler was a partner to the SoBro, and that through his company, Sedler tried to uplift the borough through his company through some trying times in the southern part of the Bronx.

“When the south Bronx was at its lowest point, Herb was in there battling to keep it going,” said Pariser, adding “he kept the jobs here, he kept the businesses here

when so many others were packing up and moving, and you needed the Herb Sedlers of the world to give this area some (stability).”

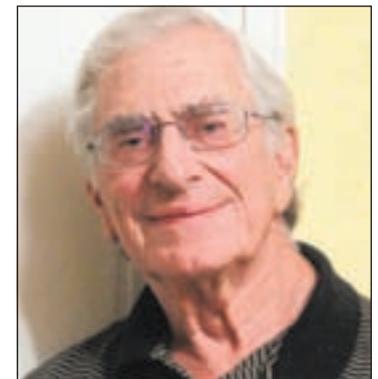
Additionally, Sedler was vice-president of the Port Morris Local Development Corporation.

Sedler founded Paper Enterprises in 1961, and gradually expanded the business, eventually absorbing several of his competitors, the company stated.

He was a veteran of the United States Army, serving from 1951 to 1953. During his time in the service he was part of the First Cavalry Division and stationed in Korea and Japan.

He also helped foster new generations of entrepreneurs, serving as an ‘Executive on Campus’ and mentoring a team of students in the entrepreneurial competition.

Sedler is survived by his wife, a retired New York City school-



Herbert Sedler

Photo courtesy of Paper Enterprises

teacher; his son Jordan, president of Paper Enterprises; and his daughter Lauren, an art historian and dealer in Bath, England. He also leaves behind four grandchildren, Alex, Jesse, Oliver, and Victoria.

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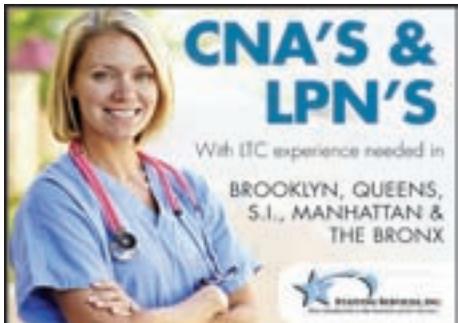
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City Year, volunteers serve on MLK Day

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

One organization has continued to put the word 'unity' into 'community', especially on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

On Monday, January 19, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, over 300 City Year New York members took a trip to P.S. 55, located on St. Paul's Place between Park and Washington avenues, to service the school.

Accompanied by 600 volunteers, City Year members donated their time and efforts to beautify the school by building benches and bookshelves for classrooms and painting murals on hallway walls.

City Year, a national education nonprofit founded in Boston 1988, serves 25 cities nationwide, and came to New York in 2002, when they deployed teams of AmeriCorps to serve in the Bronx yearly.

City Year has served many Bronx schools over the years such as P.S. 48 Joseph R. Drake School, P.S. 75, M.S. 302 Luisa Dessus Cruz School, P.S. 130 Abram Stevens Hewitt School, P.S. 154 Jonathan D. Hyatt School, C.I.S. X303 Leadership & Community Service School and 24X Bronx Early College Academy.

Each floor of P.S. 55, also known as the Benjamin Franklin School, was given a different mural theme.

The second floor was dedicated to rain forests paintings, while the third floor was split into two sections of paintings - the



(C) Erica Hamilton, executive director of City Year New York gathers with City Year and AmeriCorps members before City Year New York's MLK Day of Service at P.S. 55 Benjamin Franklin School on Monday, January 19.

Photo courtesy of City Year

history of hip hop and the history of the Bronx, the latter of which included a map of the entire Bronx and a portrait of Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

City Year members on the first floor helped children write letters, draw pictures and make welcome back sandwiches for our troops and veterans.

In addition, City Year New York also

hosted a Community Resource Fair, providing an opportunity to residents of the Morrisania community to meet local agencies and organizations to learn more about the specific services that these groups provide to residents and families daily.

The fair included free tax prep, health screenings, a kids' zone as well as healthy snacks and giveaways.

"This holiday signifies a positive opportunity for City Year and its accompanied volunteers to work on many different projects together and help with the challenges currently taking place in New York as well as the entire United States," said Erica Hamilton, executive director of City Year.

"Our AmeriCorps members, as well as those who volunteer with us on this special day, are living proof there are many people in our society who do care about these issues and want to make an impact and carry on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of serving," she added.

"City Year has a big impact on schools and communities all over the country, putting huge but equal emphasis on each of its projects," said AmeriCorps member Krystina Alphonso, a Bronx resident who is also a coach, mentor and tutor at P.S. 55.

According to children at the event, the day was much better spent giving back to the community rather than staying home from school.

"We are happy that the community is thankful, but (the students) are also thankful to be in a position to help the people that need it," said Mia Bradley-Hannibal, a P.S. 55 student and a member of the school's Bengal Tiger step team, about donating her time.

"I would do this every single day if I could," she said.

CB 10 endorses Hart Island jurisdiction plan

From Page 1

board members expressed their reservations about voting in favor of the transfer because of issues with the Parks Department, including funding concerns. But others believe Park's up to the task.

The vote was a culmination of an intense effort by the City Island Civic Association, whose corresponding secretary John Doyle has been lobbying the Bronx's City Council delegation to support the measure, and the Hart Island Project, an advocacy group that wants more appropriate island access for visitors.

"We were sensitive to the City Island community's request for support, and we were also sensitive to the request for support from the Hart Island Project, and to all of the arguments," said CB 10 district manager Kenneth Kearns after the vote.

Bob Bieder, a board member, said that he was sympathetic to the concerns of people who offered their stories of how difficult it was to visit their deceased loved ones buried on the island.

There are approximately one-million graves on the 100-acre plot of land.

According to Doyle, the City Island Civic Association supported the concept of transferring Hart Island by a vote of 44 to 2 at a

2014 meeting, and he said he was pleased to have the community board's advisory opinion to further advocate for the legislation.

All members of the Bronx's City Council delegation now support the legislation, said Doyle, as does Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"It is good now to finally have the community board on the same page as the community and the elected officials," he said. "Any elected official in the Bronx on the city level supports the bill."

Doyle added: "Now we can present a united front when we have to deal with the city agencies at the council."

Doyle believes that transferring the island from DOC to Parks will protect City Island from possibly uses of the Hart Island that the community might not support. He cited a number of proposals made over the years, including building an incinerator and a perceived future need by the DOC for youth correctional facilities.

Councilman James Vacca said he is supporting the legislation because he is supporting the people of City Island.

"Well, the people of City Island want this, their civic association wants it, and I backed the legislation very early on," said Vacca. "I think that this protects the island



A view of the city Department of Transportation pier at the eastern end of Fordham Street used to ferry correction officers and inmates to and from Hart Island.

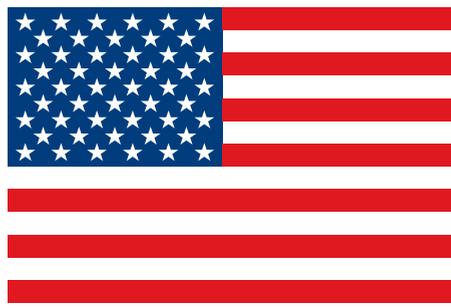
Community News Group / Photo by Patrick Rocchio

in perpetuity,"

The second bill before the NYC Council, Int. No. 144, turns the island over to the jurisdiction of the Parks Department, except for Potter's Field.

For the burial grounds, the bill calls for "the burial of deceased paupers" to continue under rules and regulations that are established by the Department of Social Services, DOC, and Parks.

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