

Transcare's failure brings 911 concerns

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO
AND MADELINE ANTHONY

TransCare's motto was 'the driving force in health care,' but it's not driving anymore.

When the contract ambulance service abruptly ceased operations recently many people expressed concern that 911 response time in the Bronx would increase.

Montefiore Medical Center, the borough's largest health-care provider, had a contract with TransCare to run its ambulances, as did St. Barnabas Hospital.

TransCare ambulances carried the hospitals' names, logos and colors, said Kenneth Kearns, CB 10 district manager, who said his board is preparing a letter to public officials on the subject.

Seven Montefiore ambulances were lost when TransCare shut down, with even more loses at St. Barnabas.

FDNY spokesman Frank Dwyer, stated that the number of ambulances that the city is now staffing daily are 81 tours, or 27 ambulances running three shifts a day, though he said a small portion of these tours may include northern Manhattan tours.

The FDNY is covering every TransCare tour, stated Dwyer, who confirmed that the loss of ambulances only effected private hospitals.

"FDNY planned for the closure of TransCare for weeks and seamlessly filled the tours lost," stated Dwyer, adding "FDNY... is working on several pilot programs geared towards reducing response times specifically in the Bronx."

Dwyer said these programs are not related to the TransCare situation.

Montefiore, which had a 16-

Continued on Page 4

PARENTS WANT PRINCIPAL OUT

90 P.S. 89 teachers have been reassigned

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

Parents are demanding the removal of a principal that has become a tyrant.

On Thursday, March 17, parents and teachers of students at P.S. 89 Williamsbridge School campaigned for the immediate ouster of principal Ralph Martinez.

Martinez, who has been the principal of P.S. 89 since 2010, has removed or reassigned approximately 90 teachers, including 30 teachers in the past two weeks, as well as for violating student's Individualized Educa-

tion Programs, the protestors charge.

The teachers that have been removed from their classroom settings have either been assigned to other classrooms or removed from the school completely, without the parents being notified of these changes, creating a poor learning environment, they said.

The students have also been transferred from class to class under similar circumstances, they claim.

The removal of these teachers

Continued on Page 4



Miss NY Visits Monte Kids

Miss New York Serena Bucaj met with Naomi Villa and several other young patients staying at Montefiore Children's Hospital last Tuesday, March 15. The Balkan beauty queen offered uplifting words of encouragement to inspire these youngsters in following their dreams. Photo by Silvio Pacifico

BronxNet expands its brand eastward

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

BronxNet, which has been in existence for over 20 years, introduced a brand new studio located on the Mercy College campus at 1200 Hutchinson Metro Center to compliment their other studio located at the Lehman College campus on the west side of the borough.

The BronxNet East studio, which held its ribbon-cutting ceremony in November, offers

and provides training programs, public access workshops as well as field and studio production classes for its students and trainees who look to pursue a career in media and/or video production.

The network also provides high school and college students with internships opportunities and media training workshops, which include post-production and circ-

Continued on Page 11

Morris Park BID effort moves forward

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

An effort to create a business improvement district in Morris Park has reached a critical juncture.

Members of a Morris Park BID steering committee, along with their consultant Joe Regina, have begun the process of reaching out to property owners and merchants in the proposed BID's boundaries: Morris Park Avenue between Unionport Road and Williamsbridge Road.

According to Regina, some 313 businesses and 158 properties would comprise the proposed BID, and the property owners should receive an informational mailing soon, along with ballots.

The BID steering committee is working hand-in-hand with the property owners and the Morris Park Community Association in soliciting support.

The chairman of the committee is William Pedone, owner of Van Nest True Hardware and a property owner.

"The goal is to get on board 19 property owners and 39 merchants per week," said Regina, of a plan decided on in a committee meeting on Tuesday, March 15.

Property owners must vote because BID creation requires the assessment of a fee on the commercial portion of a property that is used to finance BID operations.



The Morris Park Business Improvement District steering committee met recently to discuss the outreach to property owners and commercial tenants along Morris Park Avenue between Williamsbridge Road and Unionport Avenue.
Photo courtesy of Joe Regina

BIDs operate with boards of directors comprised of property owners, merchants and community representatives.

BID boards are unique in that they also contain a representative from Small Business Services, as well as the city comptroller, council office, and borough president's office, said Regina.

In Morris Park's case, marketing and advertising seem to be key issues that the BID can address, as well as daily

street cleaning, special events and public safety, said Regina, whose consulting is funded by an allocation secured by Councilman James Vacca.

The notion for a Morris Park BID has been around for several years, and was originally planned by a defunct merchants association, and was helped along by the MPCA, Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corporation and Vacca, said Pedone.

"I have to give a shout-out to Coun-

cilman James Vacca, who's an enthusiastic supporter," said Pedone, adding that the steering committee will now be looking for majority approval of the property owners and commercial tenants.

The chairman said that a Morris Park BID, which already has a proposed budget, would help in a variety of ways.

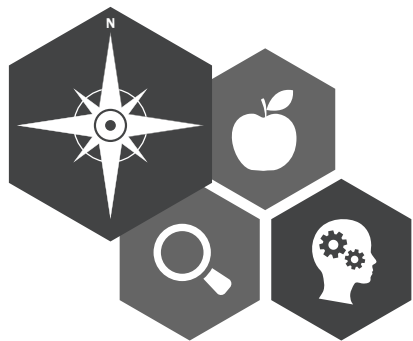
These include a general sprucing up of the area, adding pedestrian- and parking-friendly features, holding several events a year, and holiday attractions, said Pedone.

"These things are all included in the proposed budget," he said.

The BID should also prove to be an asset to the community as well, said Tony Signorile, MPCA president and steering committee member, who is a strong supporter of the effort.

The community association president said he believes that homeowners, property owners and merchants would save money in the long term and be able continue with traditions like holiday lights along the shopping strip and the annual Columbus Day Parade.

Citing the successes of the Westchester Square and Belmont BIDs as examples, Signorile said that he believes that by the end of its first year of operation, everyone will see the BID's results.



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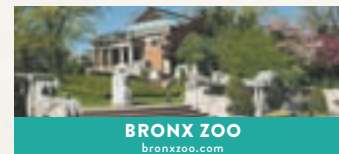
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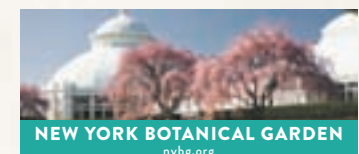
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- "Celebrating the Legacy of Jane Jacobs: A Conversation with Greg Lindsay"
Fordham Law School Constantine Room, Lincoln Center Campus
- APRIL 13 - 12:00-5:00pm
- Ninth Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium - Oral Presentations & Poster Session, McKinley Center, Rose Hill Campus
- APRIL 21 - 4:00-5:30pm
- Earth Month Presentation
Carl Zimmer - Science Writer
Larkin Hall 170
- APRIL 26 - 2:30-4:00pm
- Dr. Eric Sanderson "The Past, Present and Future of Bronx Ecology: An Update from the Weikia Project"
Flom Auditorium, Walsh Library



- APRIL 21 - 10:00am-2:00pm
- Earth Day Celebration:
The Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), the Family Learning Place, and the Engineering/Green Initiative Department will host an interactive and educational day for the community and inpatient families.



- APRIL 22 - 10:00am-12:00pm
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(L-r) Kathy Cole, Iris Rosario and Maria Guzzone, a former P.S. 89 guidance counselor.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

Parents want principal out; 90 teachers have been reassigned

from Page 1

has interfered with student's IEPs, who depended on particular teachers and teaching assistants to help them with their special educational needs, including attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism, they complained.

The parents believe that the students, many of whom learn English as a second language, have also not gotten all of the services that their IEPs promise, such as occupational and language therapies.

Many parents said the demands of a 12:1:1 special class, which should include 12 students, one teacher and one assistant teacher, have not been met.

Parents also questioned the principal's use of funds. According to an advocate, the school has been allocated funds for safety devices and enhancements that have not been installed.

"It's unbelievable," one parent said regarding the scenario at P.S. 89, who wished to remain anonymous. "The teachers are not paid accordingly - they will work overtime and on weekends but the principal (Martinez) thinks that they are not doing a good enough job so he ends up removing them when their work load is insurmountable."

"As a parent, you know your child best and you know how they learn - but this principal clearly thinks otherwise by re-assigning and removing teachers without proper consent or notification," the parent added.

"It is hard for these children to learn under these circumstances," said parent Iris Rosario, who led last week's rally. "This is very sad - and the children are suffering because of it. If I have to, I will lead another rally."

Rosario, who, in the

past, was awarded over \$80,000 from the Department of Education for her lawsuit stemming from P.S. 89 violating her two sons' IEP programs, said that Martinez has personal vendettas with parents, teachers and even students who complain or file reports against him.

Martinez, she claims, accused her of attempting to bomb the school - an allegation that she called 'ridiculous', but has banned her from visiting the school.

"I want him (Martinez) to be removed," Rosario said.

"We are investigating these allegations against principal Martinez, and we will work with families and students (of P.S. 89) to ensure we are meeting their needs," said DOE spokesperson Devora Kaye.

Martinez did not respond to a request for comment.

Transcare ambulance service's failure brings 911 concerns

from Page 1

year relationship with TransCare, was aware of its financial difficulties for about a year, said Dr. Peter Semczuk, Montefiore vice-president.

"It became apparent when they missed a payroll one week, then failed to pay Workermen's Compensation," said Dr. Semczuk.

He said the hospital enacted proactive measures and developed a contingency plan.

At one point, Transcare was handling the Montefiore's discharge ambulances as well as 911 calls, he said.

As the company's financial problems devolved, Montefiore stopped using TransCare for any discharge work, he said.

"This was a prudent thing to do," said Dr. Semczuk, "Many hospitals were scrambling to fill that

void when Transcare shut down."

For now, FDNY has picked up the slack and has devoted the same amount of ambulances to Montefiore, but Dr. Semczuk said this is not a permanent solution.

At one time TransCare was handling 20 percent of 911 calls in the borough, so the workload to recover is huge, he said

A St. Barnabas spokesman stated that the hospital had made a seamless transition to SeniorCare EMS and that its patients weren't affected.

Kearns said his board is going to continue to look into the issue.

"The hospital companies are allegedly trying to... scramble to find replacement ambulance companies," said Kearns. "EMS is taking up the slack, and as a result their response times are a little

slower because demand is so much higher."

To cover borough demand, ambulances had to be shifted from other boroughs, said Kearns.

An official at another Bronx hospital that did not use TransCare, and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that some Bronx hospitals did not use the company because they felt it was unreliable.

Al D'Angelo, a Morris Park community leader who serves on a community advisory board at two hospitals, said when he first learned of the TransCare issue that it seemed like it would probably impact 911 service in some way.

"Obviously, the less ambulances we have, the greater the response time and the more danger there is to the community," he said.



Transcare was contracted to provide ambulance service to Montefiore facilities.



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Seniors reject P.S. 71 annex proposal

BY ROBERT WIRSING

Seniors living at a Pelham Bay housing development have received assurances that a its backyard garden will not be taken away to expand the neighboring public school.

On January 19 the Middletown Plaza Resident Council, Inc. drafted a petition to prevent their park from being sold by New York City Housing Authority to the Department of Education to build an annex to P.S.71.

The petition, containing 86 signatures from senior residents, opposed an effort started last year by the Pelham Bay Taxpayers and Civic Association that asked for the parcel to be transferred to the School Construction Authority to construct a \$30 million 270-seat early learning facility.

The civic association opposed SCA's initial proposal to build the annex at Continental Avenue, East 197th Street and Hutchinson River Parkway Road and suggested the senior site as an alternative.

According to Rev. Marilyn Oliver, Middletown Plaza Resident Council president, Middletown Plaza sent their petition to their local elected officials.

NYCHA issued a response to residents and DOE that they are not interested in selling the park for a school annex, according to Rev. Oliver.

Completed on August 31, 1973, Middletown Plaza's 1.13 acre site houses a tranquil park area outfitted with several benches surrounded by grass, maple trees and evergreens.

Rev. Oliver and Middletown Plaza residents said the park has been there since

the apartment's construction and is used for a variety of recreational activities.

"A lot of seniors here are not in the best of health and cannot travel far to see their families," shared Rev. Oliver. "This park gives them a place where they can meet with their relatives especially during our annual family picnics."

"There's very little green space there to begin with and by taking that away from the seniors living at Middletown Plaza it would negatively impact their health," said Bob Beider, Community Board 10 Youth Services and Educational Committee chairman.

At Wednesday, March 16's CB 10 general board meeting, it was explained that SCA is still eyeing the Continental Avenue site for the proposed annex.

A DOE spokeswoman confirmed this, stating the department has carefully explored several options and finalized a proposal for an early childhood site that will continue to address the needs of this community.

The proposed Continental Avenue site, formerly used as a parking lot for the defunct Pelham Bay General Hospital, has raised concerns because of its size, its proximity to the Pelham Grand supportive housing complex and the Hutchinson River Parkway 3E exit, parking issues and traffic safety in the local area.

CB 10 voted its disapproval to this SCA-proposed P.S. 71 annex at last November's meeting and the board mailed SCA a letter expressing their concerns and suggestions for improving the current proposal.

Continued on page 7



Middletown Plaza's backyard is located between the 3033 Middletown Road senior building and P.S. 71's school yard.

Community News Group/Robert Wirsing



Police and neighbors search for Mahfuza Rahman, 30, who has recently been reported as missing.

Madeline Anthony / Community News Group

Bedford Park Bangladeshi woman missing for 3 months

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

Mahfuza Rahman, a 30-year-old nurse and mother, is now listed as missing following a three-month absence from her job.

The search was delayed as her husband, Mohammad Chowdhury, told his wife's co-workers that she had taken a trip back to Bangladesh to care for her parents, as reported by The Daily News.

After Mahfuza failed to return to work on the day Mohammad had promised she would, colleagues at Bellevue Hospital became suspicious and alerted authorities who called NYPD.

Rahman was last seen at Bellevue Hospital Center on the lower east side of Manhattan, at 3:30 p.m. on December 9, as she left work for the day.

Mohammad, 38, told neighbors that he himself would also return to Bangladesh, and would bring the couple's daughter with him.

Currently his whereabouts are unknown, and the 52nd Precinct detective squad is searching for him for questioning.

Mohammad is described as having Asian/Pacific Island origins, with a height of 5'7 and a weight of approximately 150 pounds.

Mahfuza, Mohammad, and their 9-year-old daughter resided in Bedford Park on East 198th Street.

On Sunday, March 6, NYPD went to the private house to search for signs of criminal activity.

They removed concrete in the front yard that was freshly poured, and had police dogs comb the property, but found nothing.

According to DCPI, the investigation is ongoing and is still considered a missing person case as there has not been any hard evidence of criminal activity.

The investigation is ongoing said a DCPI

spokesperson.

A rally led by the Bangladesh Association of the Bronx was held for the missing Mahfuza on Saturday, March 19, in front of the Bedford Park residence to draw attention to the case.

"The more people that know about this, the better it is for her," said Adaline Walker Santiago, chairwoman of Community Board 7, who was present at the rally.

Since Mahfuza has no family in the states, it is the community and the police who will lead the crusade to find her, or discover what has happened to her.

Interestingly enough, nobody at the rally knew Mahfuza personally, yet neighbors were out in numbers, expressing their collective concern.

Residents who lived nearby said the couple was quiet, and kept to themselves.

Neighbors from Mahfuza's native Bangladesh were especially motivated to find the missing woman.

They have plans to put signs and photos up in their home country, so if Mahfuza's husband were to return, local police could identify and question him.

Santiago says she spoke to one of Mahfuza's neighbors at the rally, who said he knew of someone close to the Mahfuza.

"You never know what small detail could lead to closing this case," said Santiago, who doesn't understand why a nurse and a mother of a young daughter would just up and leave.

"She is in a helping profession," continued Santiago, "It doesn't make any sense."

According to Santiago, neighbors are questioning why authorities have not told the police whether Mohammad has traveled abroad.

Anyone with information on this case should contact Detective Sheldon Smith at 718-220-5836.

Yula celebrates 90 years in the Bronx

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A Hunts Point-based manufacturer of heat exchange equipment is celebrating its 90th year as a family owned business – a relatively rare feat in an era of globalization.

At a time when it's challenging to expand manufacturing in the United States, let alone in the city, Yula Corporation, a successful business run by the Feldman family, is celebrating nearly a century in business.

The company is the manufacturer of custom-made heat exchangers and other pressure tubes for industrial uses and large heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems.

Yula was founded in the Marble Hill community in 1926 by Henry Yula as a water heater maker, and gradually grew to encompass HVAC systems for some of the city's iconic buildings built in the mid-20th century.

Eventually, the company expanded to service industrial customers, especially in the pharmaceutical industry, which comprises much of Yula's business today.

It is now a third generation family company, with the cousins and brothers Jason, Matthew and Michael, all vice-presidents, working side-by-side with their fathers, company president Fred Feldman and Larry Feldman, chief financial officer.

"We are really proud of the 90-year (anniversary) and we are really celebrating that this year," said Matthew Feldman.

Fred Feldman added that the area in the vicinity of their Hunts Point plant used to be called 'Little Pittsburgh,' and that they are one of few remaining businesses of its type located there.

"We are very proud that in one of the toughest manufacturing areas in the world...we are still able to run a successful manufacturing business," said Fred Feldman, adding that it is difficult to do this in the United States, let alone in the Bronx.

Yula has about 25 employees in addition to the Feldman family, and operates a 20,000-square-foot factory space with adjacent offices on Bryant Avenue.

About 70% of the workforce is from the Bronx.

The Feldmans' father and grandfather, Irwin Feldman, started at Yula in 1955 as an engineer, said Matthew Feldman.

"Irwin eventually purchased the business, risking it all," he said. "That is when we moved out of the HVAC market into more sophisticated industries and really spread our wings."

Besides serving the pharmaceutical industry, it generates about 20 percent of its revenue from its legacy HVAC business, with the balance coming from its custom heat exchangers, said Jason Feldman, vice-president.

"We definitely have a lot of New York pride," said Michael Feldman, vice-president, who added that Yula always works with its customers to find custom solutions.

Michael Feldman said, "As a custom designer and fabricator we can always accommodate new and maybe unusual requests that someone may have, whereas someone else may have a cookie cutter design and cannot change it."

The Bronx has always provided the firm with a reliable employee base and the family expects to call the Bronx its home for many generations to come,



Members of the Feldman family (l-r) Fred Feldman, Yula president; Larry Feldman, COO; Matthew Feldman, vice president; Michael Feldman, vice president and Jason Feldman, vice president.

Photo courtesy of Jonathan Wallen/Yula



Elected officials and community leaders rallied against the gun violence recently plaguing the Throggs Neck Houses. Photo by Silvio Pacifico

Electeds, residents stand up to violence

BY STEVEN GOODSTEIN

Political leaders rallied with residents last Saturday in response to a recent wave of gun violence.

On Saturday, March 19, Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Councilman James Vacca, the Throggs Neck Residents Council and Stand Up to Violence rallied against gun violence at the Throggs Neck Houses.



Minister Kwame Thompson, SUV outreach director, speaks out against gun violence.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

March 10.

The woman who was shot was treated at Jacobi Medical Center.

On Tuesday, March 8, a young man was shot less than 400 feet away from the location where the woman was shot two days later.

The goal of the rally was to bring awareness to gun violence.

"We need to stop violence in its tracks," said Klein, who has allocated over \$1 million over the past few years to SUV, a unique violence prevention program that deploys 'credible messengers' and 'violence interrupters' to mediate conflict in the community and help high-risk individuals in targeted, high-crime areas in the borough.

"Today, I join with community leaders and active residents here at the Throggs Neck Houses to bring awareness to this problem," said Benedetto.

"People should not have to fear for their safety when walking down the street," Vacca said.

"It is time that we take back our community," said Monique Johnson, president of the Throggs Neck Residents Council. "If we continue to allow fear to paralyze us then we will continue to be victims and not victors."

"In unity, there is strength, and in strength, there is power," Johnson added.

Today, I join with community leaders and active residents here at the Throggs Neck Houses to bring awareness to this problem.

Michael R. Benedetto
Assemblyman

The rally began at 2829 Dewey Avenue, the same location where a 32-year old woman was shot in the wrist, on Dewey Avenue near Swinton Avenue at about 7 p.m. on Thursday,



Throggs Neck Houses resident Nelson Vega holds up a thought provoking sign.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

BX200 showcases 30 Bronx artists

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

The Bronx will soon be making an impact in Brooklyn!

The creators of BX200, an online directory for the Bronx art scene, are curating an exhibit of everything Bronx for a Bushwick art gallery.

BRONX NOW, the exhibit set to open in late April, will showcase 30 of the 200 artists on the BX200 site.

The exhibit aims to draw attention to a growing number of Bronx-based artists and let people know the work on display is just a small taste of what the borough has to offer in terms of arts and culture.

While the show shies away from making the artists adhere to a single theme, there is a commonality throughout - each artist has a strong message and story to tell.

Eileen Walsh, an artist and art therapist who resides in Port Morris, curated the show with Laura James, a painter and book illustrator who founded BX200.

Walsh says there is a strong sense of separation from one artist to the next, more so than in most galleries or shows.

"They have distinctive voices, each work is a very personal, passionate message...you don't get the sense that they do art just to create something pretty, or to sell it...you can get into the psyche of every single artist," expands Walsh.

All types of work will be displayed in-



"Alejandra Delfin" by John Ahearn.

Courtesy of Eileen Walsh

cluding paintings, performance pieces, photography, and social practice art.

The pieces, like the artists themselves, are unique and expressive.

Some pieces are in-your-face and political, with artists focusing on police brutality and highly contentious issues like the rezoning of the Jerome Avenue neigh-

borhood by the de Blasio administration.

Others - like Rebecca Allan's abstract paintings focusing on tributaries - are inspired by beauty and environmental awareness.

John Ahearn, a well known artist and sculptor, has made a name for himself by creating acrylic castings of Bronxites since the 1970s.

His dynamic, life-size pieces will be on display alongside the likes of Rhynna Santos, a Puerto-Rican born photographer, whose work focuses on the health care industry, and Latino immigration.

James, who resides in West Farms, says she was inspired to create BX200 because she wanted to identify and get to know artists in her borough.

"I knew there was so much art here.. but it wasn't slapping me in the face, I was like 'hey what's going on?'" recalls Laura.

What began as a personal quest has become an epicenter for art and discussion. BX200 has held multiple events since its creation so artists can physically meet and exchange ideas.

Artists on the site hail from the south Bronx to Riverdale to Throggs Neck, and as such the exhibit will showcase a blend of neighborhoods, faces, and ideals.

As the name of the show implies, it is a snapshot of the Bronx - now.

DC 9 painters to refinish Bronx Museum of the Arts

Forty painters from District Council 9 International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (DC 9) will be refinishing the Bronx Museum of the Arts' first floor galleries.

The forty members will spend five days ensuring the first floor galleries at the Bronx Museum of the Arts shine for the Bronx community.

"We live here. We work here. We contribute here," said Joseph Azzopardi, business manager and secretary treasurer at DC 9. "DC 9 members are dedicated to serving the communities we live and work in. From refinishing The Unisphere

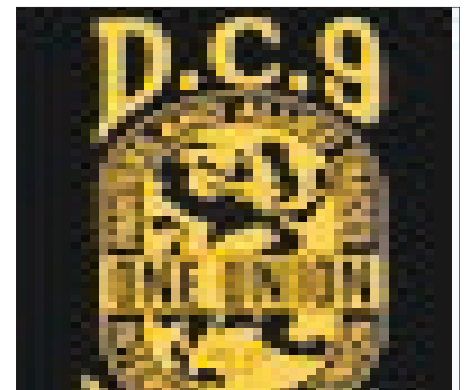
in Queens to participating in action days with Covenant House in Manhattan our members know the value of giving back."

The value of the work being executed by DC 9 is estimated to be worth in excess of \$20,000 and elected officials are taking notice.

"I want to thank DC 9 for dedicating hundreds of hours of service to better the Bronx community," said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "Checks are nice, but someone has to execute the work to continue improving the Bronx community making it more vibrant for current and fu-

ture residents. We know we can count on DC 9 in the past, today, and in the future, and we appreciate their work on behalf of the thousands of users of the Bronx Museum of the Arts."

"DC 9 and its members are contributing the only way they know how - with their time and the skills the union taught them," said Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson. "The members of DC 9 and their contractors understand we are all community partners. I am committed to standing with them as they better New York City one job at a time."



Seniors reject P.S. 71 annex proposal

From page 5

CB 10's decision was based on the belief the proposed annex wasn't large enough to accommodate the projected increase in the student population by the year 2018, the high traffic volume near the planned facility and the site placing enormous pressure on the surrounding community.

"NYCHA told us from the start that they weren't interested in selling the (Middletown Plaza) park, but we remained hopeful that they might have reconsidered moving the facility to that

location instead of its current one," said Michele Torroni, Pelham Bay Taxpayers Association president.

"We still feel the Continental Avenue site is not a good spot for pre-k and kindergarten students and overall the facility there will not alleviate P.S. 71's overcrowding."

A second petition that is being circulated demands the city relocate the annex to the Pelham Grand on Pelham Parkway South and St. Paul Avenue, however that property is currently being used for supportive housing.



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Bronx County Civil Court Judge, Llinet Rosado giving her speech at Saint Barnabas High School.

International Women's Day at St. Barnabas High School

BY JOANNA WALCH, TAISE MARTINEZ, AND GEETANGALIE GOBERDAN

On Tuesday, March 8, International Women's Day, a world-wide event that celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women from the past, present and future, was celebrated.

This holiday originated in Italy as a political event. Over the course of history International Women's Day has become a part of the culture of many countries and is now widely known as a day for men to express their love and appreciation for the women in their lives by giving them a yellow flower called a mimosa.

This year Saint Barnabas High School celebrated International Women's Day with a dress down and bake sale sponsored by the school's Italian Club.

The donation proceeds went to help the less fortunate for the upcoming Easter holiday. The Italian Club also held a school assembly where the students had the privilege of listening to Bronx County Civil Court Judge, Llinet Rosado, speak about her inspiring life story.

Judge Rosado was born in the city of Santiago de Los Caballeros in the Dominican Republic and immigrated to the United States as a young child. In 1997 she graduated from Union University at Albany Law School and started her impressive career.

Most recently she named as one of the "Bronx's 25 Most Influential Women" an honor sponsored by the Bronx Time Reporter.

In September 2016, Judge Rosado will also be honored by the Dominican Bar Association for her noteworthy contributions to the Latino community and demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion within the legal profession.

Prior to Judge Rosado's speech, members of the SBHS Italian Club told stories of women from various cultures who have made a difference in the world.

Judge Rosado followed the same suit and spoke to the students about her childhood, her background and the importance of family. She spoke of how her struggles in life helped her grow and become a successful judge. Her story is a great example of courage, strength, integrity, and an inspiration for young women everywhere.

The students of Saint Barnabas were touched and quite inspired by her encouraging words.

St. Barnabas High School is an all-girls, independent Catholic high school located in the Woodlawn section of the Northeastern Bronx, adjoining the city of Yonkers.

For more information about St. Barnabas High School, contact Jennifer Geideman at (718) 325-8800 x11, or email jgeideman@stbarnabashigh.com.

City Island requests park road fix-ups

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

A local civic group is reaching out to city agencies to improve hazardous situations.

The City Island Civic Association's board penned a letter to three city agencies about an array of road conditions in Pelham Bay Park: flooding on Shore Road between Bartow Circle and the county line, street lights that do not work, potholes and lack of permanent deer crossing signs.

The civic group wrote the NYC Parks Department, Department of Environmental Protection and city Department of Transportation after a short film about the dangers of traveling on Shore Road, made by filmmakers James and Tommy Breen, garnered widespread attention.

"When we call 311, write letters, and make phone calls to ask that these problems be fixed, we are usually told that the problem resides with one agency or another, but nothing happens," stated the CICA letter, adding "It seems clear that interagency collaboration is required to address each of the...problems."

The letter expressed concerns about streams of water running into the roadway at several locations on Shore Road, along with many potholes along that road and elsewhere in the park.

According to a recent informal survey, dozens of lights in Pelham Bay Park.

It is difficult to make 311 reports about outages of lights because oftentimes the access roads to City Island and those elsewhere in the park have no addresses, said CICA first vice-president Fred Ramftl.

"I have been reporting issues with lights in the park to 311 for the past two or

two-and-a-half years," said Ramftl. "A lot of the street names are not in the city computers."

Orchard Beach Road also is prone to deer crossings, making for dangerous conditions, added Ramftl, who said that street lights along that road are also frequently hit and knocked down by vehicles.

Lighting in the park has been a stubborn safety concern for a couple of years, said John Doyle, a CICA board member.

On Shore Road, motorists sometimes even have to drive into the oncoming traffic lane to avoid flooding or ice on the roadway, according to published reports

A spokeswoman for Mayor de Blasio's office said that the city has received six complaints about Shore Road in the past year, and has responded aggressively.

"The Department of Environmental Protection has determined that natural water seepage from underground is likely leading to the deterioration," stated the City Hall spokeswoman of Shore Road. "The Department of Transportation will continue road maintenance to make sure potholes are filled, and agencies will collaborate on a more long-term solution to the problem."

The spokeswoman also stated that DOT is aware of concerns regarding lighting in this area of the Bronx and is already working on repairs.

Councilman James Vacca recently was able to procure a temporary electric message board warning of deer that was placed in the park by DOT in December 2015.

As of yet, no permanent deer crossing signs have been placed in the park by the city, sources said.



Part of Shore Road is prone to flooding, and in winter, the water can freeze and create hazardous driving conditions.

Photo courtesy of James Breen

Baychester woman graces cover of 'O' magazine

BY MADELINE ANTHONY

Shaniqua Garvin of Baychester recently repped the Bronx on the cover of Oprah's 'O Magazine'.

The April issue, which hit stands on March 15, focused on the weight loss journeys of nine women in the tri-state area.

Shaniqua, 35, shared her weight loss story, and the goals she set for herself.

Weight loss, however, has only been a small part of Shaniqua's progress over the course of the past year.

In January 2015, her husband abruptly passed away, thrusting Shaniqua into single motherhood - at the time her son was just five-years-old.

It was her late husband's death, which was largely caused by his declining health, that made Shaniqua realize she needed to live a healthier life.

"My son only has me now," said Shaniqua, who was told she was pre-diabetic, and that her cholesterol levels were not good.

She decided to tackle these problems by bringing her weight down, and mak-

ing small conscious decisions to change her lifestyle, like taking regular walks every afternoon.

As an event planner for childrens birthday parties, Shaniqua is constantly surrounded by junk food like pizza and cake, making poor diet choices routine.

"It's hard to resist when you've been working all day," says Shaniqua.

Once she started keeping a journal though, Garvin realized she was eating and drinking when she was upset or sad, something she never realized she did.

"Paying attention to my feelings really helped," said Shaniqua looking back. Now, she rarely drinks and makes an effort to stay away from junk food.

Another huge help was learning to lean on others and form communities.

For her weight loss journey, that community has been the other eight woman she met on the set of Oprah Magazine - she has a gym date set with one of them for this Friday.

For coping with the loss of her husband, Shaniqua has joined widow sup-

port groups.

"Surround yourself with people, make connections," advised Shaniqua.

Overall, she feels like a brand new person, compared to the woman she was just over a year ago.

"Not to say its not hard, I still have bad days, but I have definitely come a long way," said Shaniqua, "It's like night and day."

Shaniqua has shed nine pounds since she started making healthy changes a few months ago.

She says her goal is to feel great, not match a perfect number on a scale.

"I want to look good in a bikini, I'm waiting till I look and feel good...and I've already been feelin' pretty great," Shaniqua exclaimed.



(Right) Shaniqua Garvin inside 'O' Magazine. Courtesy of Hearst Publishing

Castle Hill Little League celebrates diamond anniversary

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Castle Hill Little League celebrated its diamond 60th anniversary at its recent gala.

The league, which teaches baseball to boys and girls ages four to 16, marked this remarkable milestone on Friday, March 18 at Maestro's Caterers.

CHLL welcomed back about 20 alumni players and league officials, as well several elected officials and upwards of 300 guests in total, said Henry Pelayo, CHLL president.

Senator Jeff Klein was the keynote

speaker.

Klein presented the league with a proclamation celebrating their anniversary, as did Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr., Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda and city Comptroller Scott Stringer.

According to Pelayo, the current 'nucleus' of the league is its volunteer parents, who do everything from maintain the fields to teaching the fundamentals of the game.

For the future, he said that league officials hope to expand the number of teams



Assemblyman Benedetto and Senator Klein presented a citation and a proclamation to the league officials. Photo by Laura Stone



Castle Hill Little League Board of Directors and 60th Anniversary Committee (back row, l-r) vice president Rene Aponte, Mickey Fryer, Kwan Justinano, president Henry Pelayo, Senator Klein, Assemblyman Benedetto, Ben Zapata, Mayra Soto, Sherrees Sanchez (front row, l-r) Christina Martinez, Helen Vega, Irma Fonseca, Michelle Arce-Cruz. Photo by Laura Stone

beyond the 30 it currently fields, create more travel teams to represent CHLL and continue to improve its faculties on Zerega Avenue that some people in the community call "the mini-Yankee Stadium."

The league will kick off its season this year with its annual parade on Saturday, May 7. It usually features about 800 participants and is the biggest little league parade in the city.

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The City College of New York's School of Education is hosting an accreditation visit by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standards in the Spring 2016 semester. Interested parties are invited to submit third-party comments to the visiting team. Please note that comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of professional education programs offered, and should specify the party's relationship to the EPP (i.e., graduate, present or former faculty member, employer of graduates). We invite you to submit written testimony to:
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Jacobi Medical Ctr. uses innovation to fight HIV

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Jacobi Medical Center and North Central Bronx Hospital continues to use interactive technology in a sustained, coordinated effort to promote HIV prevention and awareness.

The medical center has reached a milestone of 120,000 people being tested through rapid testing, an HIV test that can produce results about 20 minutes, since it started its large, coordinated testing effort called Project B.R.I.E.F., according to hospital officials.

It is also fully implementing relatively new methods of protecting people who are at high risk of infection, unwittingly or not, to HIV, officials said.

Project B.R.I.E.F. was started in 2002 by Dr. Yvette Calderon and Dr. Jason Leider, who have both risen through the ranks of the North Bronx Health Network, which runs Jacobi

and NCBH, since founding the program that diagnoses the virus that causes AIDS as resident physicians.

Project B.R.I.E.F. stands for behavior intervention, rapid HIV test, innovative video, efficient cost and health care savings, and facilitated seamless linkage to outpatient HIV care, according to a spokesman.

The project seeks to handle illiteracy that often serves as a barrier to medical treatment, including HIV testing and prevention, said the doctor. A state law that requires a signed consent to test for HIV also can sometimes complicate getting people tested.

"We have to convey the importance of being tested and the importance of coming for healthcare to many people who have difficulty in reading the written word," said Dr. Leider, Jacobi's adult HIV medical



Dr. Jason Leider, adult HIV medical director at Jacobi Medical Center.

Photo courtesy of Jacobi Medical Center

director.

He explained the program uses interactive technology like video in English and Spanish to reach

a clientele that sometimes cannot read well, with the doctor citing county health rankings that show more than 40% of borough adults may be illiterate, not able to read at an eighth grade level.

Project B.R.I.E.F. seeks to utilize all NCBH's departments, including pharmacies, dental offices, and emergency departments to encourage people to be rapid tested and to learn more about HIV using interactive technology, he said.

About 90% of the people who do test HIV positive, there are about 25,000 to 30,000 estimated people in the borough who have HIV or AIDS, accept treatment, said Dr. Leider.

The doctor said treatment is sometimes free and often can prevent 'opportunistic' infections that can arise from having a weak immune system.

The doctor said that

with Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s '#Not62' initiative working to raise health outcomes, preventing HIV infections need to be a key component.

"The HIV diagnoses and deaths from AIDS is one of the things that keeps the Bronx in last place," said the doctor, referring to a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation annual survey that showed the Bronx in last place out the New York State's 62 counties in overall health for several years.

In addition to the 120,000 people who have been tested, NCBH is also making full use of new treatments including pre-exposure and post-exposure Prophylaxis, pills that people can take when they are at a high-risk for HIV infection either before or after possible exposure to the virus, according to Dr. Leider and a Jacobi spokesman.

Treatments like Post-exposure Prophylaxis are use-

ful for people who may have had unwanted exposure to HIV, said Dr. Leider.

This could be for police officers that may have been bitten by a suspect who could be HIV positive, or emergency medical technicians or civilians who are accidentally pricked by a needle, explained the doctor.

It can also be used to prevent infection shortly after someone has sex with an HIV-affected partner without protection, or when a condom breaks, the doctor said.

If you would like an HIV rapid test, just go to the Jacobi or NCBH emergency department, said a hospital spokesman.

Hospital officials also stated HIV is at epidemic proportions among black and Latino gay men, and they cited a recent medical study showing 50% and 25% respectively will be HIV infected at some time in their lives.

BronxNet expands its brand eastward

from Page 1

relating field production equipment.

The new, state of the art studio provides a control room, media labs, as well as post-production and circulating field production equipment, allowing students to learn television producing, videography, graphics, editing, directing and more while participating in these production certification training classes.

Previously, the network gained recognition by hosting a variety of talk shows, including Open 2.0, Bronx Live! and BronxTalk, which is hosted by director of community relations Gary Axelbank, which highlights crime, economic development, as well as education, among other focuses.

Beginning in 1993, the vision of BronxNet came from dedicated Bronx leaders who

worked with Bronx residents to create a fully equipped television station and media center accessible to Bronx residents, students and community organizations.

Along with a long list of existing shows, BronxNet recently launched two new signature programs, 'The Bronx Buzz', which hosts casual discussions with Bronx reporters, and 'Open University', which is crewed, hosted and produced entirely by students and offers viewers with youthful perspectives on a wide range of issues in the borough.

BronxNet also provides the borough with the only live call-in Spanish speaking talk show in the Bronx, 'Dialogo Abierto'.

The BronxNet East studio isn't BronxNet's only recent improvement.

Currently, Bronx-

Net's facility at Lehman College is being upgraded and renovated, a change that will better utilize the space in the studio.

BronxNet is also planning a new studio in the Hub, which will bring public access TV to the south Bronx.

"BronxNet is committed to providing Bronxites with ultra-local programming and production training, equipment access and workforce development opportunities," Michael Max Knobbe, executive director of BronxNet. "Our compact, innovative East Bronx studio is yielding big results, and we would like to thank Mercy College, Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., former Borough President Fernando Ferrer and other friends and supporters for making this all possible."

"On behalf of our dedicated board of di-

rectors, staff, students and independent producers, we welcome you to participate at many different levels," Knobbe added.

BronxNet programs are available on channels 67, 68, 69, 70, 951 and 952 on the Cablevision system and on channels 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38 on the Verizon Fios.



(L-r) Gary Axelbank, host; Ed Garcia Conde, Welcome to the Bronx; and Steven Goodstein; Bronx Times Reporter on the set of the 'Bronx Buzz'.

Photo courtesy of Michael Max Knobbe



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Selenie Villar, Program Coordinator, 718-829-1564 EXT 2

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