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CB18 Honors Past Chair, Welcomes New



Photo by Linda Steinmuller

Story on page 8

Michael Ien (center) with new Chairperson Naomi Hopkins (second from left), past and present board members, and elected officials.



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Building Bonds and Charging Forward in Breukelen Houses

By Jibreel Jalloh

In Canarsie's Breukelen Houses, a beacon of progress shines in the form of Nigel Dupree, the dynamic president of the resident association. His journey to leadership, he reflects, has been "more than I can imagine," carrying him into spaces where he can advocate for his neighbors. As the community's voice, he emphasizes the power of information, equipping residents to make informed decisions about their homes and lives.

Dupree's tenure has been marked by tangible strides toward improving mental and physical health resources. His approach is about bringing value to the community that extends beyond temporary fixes. "If I can bring the community together as one, we can do powerful things," he states, measuring success not by individual achievements but by collective unity.

Under his leadership, Breukelen Houses has seen successful Family Days, the introduction of mental health resources and improvements to the physical environment like installation of new light fixtures. These changes have fostered a palpable sense of community spirit. But for Dupree, it's the fight for a new community center that remains a crucial goal, envisioning it as a hub for seniors and youth, equipped with vital resources like computer rooms.

Confronting bureaucracy, Dupree is candid about the challenges, noting,



Nigel Dupree

"It seems like in politics, everybody's fending for yourself." Yet, his resolve is unwavering, advocating for collaboration across districts to amplify the community's voice.

Dupree's vision for 2024 is unity, urging, "We must come together to make a change in our community." He honors his community, noting their hard work and the peaceful days they've achieved together. He fondly recalls childhood memories of a united community—a legacy he's determined to continue.

Dupree doesn't seek the limelight for himself, insisting on acknowledging his committed team. "I don't want to do anything without my community because it ain't just me," he humbly asserts. His leadership exemplifies the ethos that in unity, there's strength—guiding Breukelen Houses toward a brighter, more cohesive future.

In closing, President Nigel Dupree's leadership is complemented by a dedicated board of members at Breukelen



Members of the Breukelen Board

Houses who share his commitment to community improvement and empowerment. Vice President Stacey Thomas, Treasurer Luis Rivera, Secretary Paul Hicks, Corresponding Secretary Jasmine Rivera, Membership Secretary Mary Smalls and Sergeant at Arms Roxanne Crium all play pivotal roles in driving forward the mission of unity and positive change for Canarsie's largest development. Their collective efforts continue to make Breukelen Houses a beacon of hope and progress.

Jibreel Jalloh created a Canarsie-based advocacy organization that has fought for a range of investments, including ferry service and anti-gun violence programs. Jibreel graduated from Baruch College (CUNY) and is currently pursuing a master's degree at New York University. He's worked in the office of multiple elected officials, including Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and Congressman Hakeem Jeffries. Jibreel is a member of Community Board 18. Learn more at theflossy.org or send him an email at team@theflossy.org.

International Day of Education Sixth Theme: "Learning for Lasting Peace"

By Kasha Jenkins

We sat in rows, index cards tucked at the back of our desks where they could not be accessed. Only a black or blue pen could be used. While briskly walking through the aisles of desks, my Latin teacher, Mr. O'Neill, stated to us, "We do not study for an exam; we study for life." Although I valued high grades, I realized education was more than numerical value. It was the key ingredient for me to learn more than just about my community, to become an overall better being.

On December 3, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly designated January 24th as International Day of Education. The purpose of this day is to acknowledge the positive effects quality education has to establish global peace. For its sixth anniversary, International Day of Education will celebrate "Learning for Lasting Peace" as its theme.

Principal and Adjunct Professor Ornela Parker, 31, stated that higher education was always valued in her household. As a child, she migrated from Jamaica where only 19% of the country's citizens attend college. Her transition to America was marked by her mother's desire for her and all her siblings to receive a higher quality education that was not available

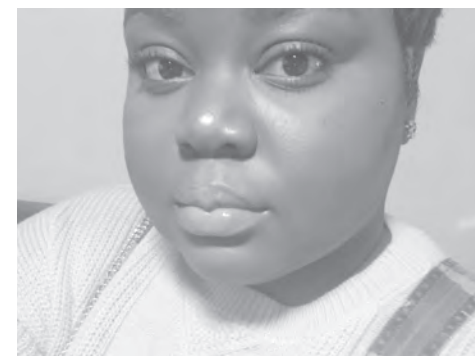
in Jamaica. Unfortunately, for approximately 258 million children worldwide, political and socioeconomic barriers, i.e. cultural, gender and race, affect their ability to attend school and/or obtain higher education. According to the non-profit organization, Save the Children, the pandemic caused approximately one in five children to drop out of school in underdeveloped countries due to a rise in poverty, child marriage and child labor.

For the millions of children who live under difficult conditions, education is the gateway to gain access to a brighter future and peace. When children are engaged in education, they are able to practice discourse and challenge a democratic society as adults. This includes the law, the economy and media. It builds confidence and student agency. These future leaders will understand representation matters by voting and advocating for underrepresented demographics/population within their community and beyond. The classroom is an essential place to develop students' awareness. As a school leader, Parker promotes student awareness by focusing on the adults who are facilitating instruction, by actively improving their cultural consciousness through ongoing training. She further

stated, "It is important for educators to interrogate their practices and systems to ensure they are promoting cultural diversity and awareness."

The fight for equitable education and peace is a daily battle. Online training in DEI, tutoring students of disenfranchised communities and visiting/learning about other countries to understand their views on education are other ways society can gain a broader perspective to create stronger education international laws.

Kasha Jenkins was born and raised in Brooklyn. She is currently a paraprofessional for the NYC Department of Education while obtaining her Master's in Special Education. She enjoys journaling, sightseeing and visiting new exhibitions at local museums.



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Spring Creek

Dog Thrown From 11th Story Balcony, Woman Perishes From Fatal Stab Wounds

By Melissa Billie Clark

Officers from the 75th Precinct responded to a 911 call at 1500 Hornell Loop around 7 p.m. on Friday, January 19th, and discovered a gruesome scene – Donna Marie Hyman, 58, a longtime resident of Starrett City, was found dead in her apartment, and her beloved dog was viciously killed.

Police said the victim was stabbed multiple times in the torso, and EMS pronounced her dead at the scene. It's alleged that her 36-year-old son stabbed his mother and her beloved dog, Gigi, and threw the pet off their 11th-story balcony. In a struggle, he also sustained stab wounds and bite marks from the dog.

Neighbors saw the male suspect sitting outside, unclothed, next to the deceased dog. A witness claims that the 36-year-old had a seizure while a neighbor stayed with him, waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

He is currently at Brookdale Hospital, in critical condition, and is unresponsive.

Sources say that Hyman and her son argued often; however, she mostly kept to herself. She was known to be reserved, quiet and kind. Community members were distraught as they expressed their feelings on a Facebook forum: "It is so sad and disheartening to have something like this happen."

There are no arrests, and an investigation is ongoing.

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

Facebook photos



Canarsie Bodega Robbed at Gunpoint, Large Sum of Cash Stolen



By Linda Steinmuller

The NYPD is looking for the thief who stole \$3,000 in cash from a corner store on Rockaway Parkway and Glenwood Road last month.

The robbery occurred around 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, December 28, 2023. Police said an unidentified male entered A & Y Family Inc., at 1431 Rockaway Parkway, flashed a firearm and demanded the 24-year-old store employee open the cash register. The victim complied, and the robber fled in an unknown direction with the loot.

The suspect is described as approximately 6' and weighing approximately 180 pounds. He was last seen wearing a green coat, gray hooded sweatshirt and gray sneakers. Police are asking for the public's assistance in identifying the culprit.

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

Flatlands

Two Police Officers Injured in Car Stop

By Linda Steinmuller

The NYPD is looking for the individual who fled a car stop earlier this month, causing two officers from the 63rd Precinct to be injured.

Around 7:15 p.m. on Friday, January 12th, the two officers attempted to conduct a lawful car stop at Glenwood Road and Ralph Avenue when an unidentified driver fled the location in the vehicle, according to police. In the process, the officers collided with a separate uninvolved vehicle, both sustaining injuries. They were taken to an area

hospital in stable condition.

The sought individual is described as a male with a medium complexion, wearing a gray winter coat and red jeans at the time of the car stop.

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



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Sixty-Ninth Precinct Holds First Sector A Build the Block Meeting for 2024



Officers Woods, Singh and Delgado

By Brenda Cox

Considering the frigid cold that gripped the city mid-January and given the sparse attendance that has become the norm for Build the Block meetings, having 13 attendees at the 69th Precinct's Sector A meeting on Thursday, January 18th, was quite impressive. Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) Gunvinder Singh conducted the meeting, which was held at Holy Family Church, 9719 Flatlands Avenue, assisted by Police Officer Carlos Delgado and Community Crime Prevention Officer Matthew Woods.

Singh gave an update on some of the quality of life issues that irk many in the community. He reported that in 2023, the department was successful in towing over 400 vehicles and removing several illegal firearms from the streets. Singh stated that despite a recent shortage in the department, the same due diligence would be exercised in 2024.

Additionally, the NCO reported that, so far, there were

two shootings for the year within the precinct, one of which was linked to another committed in late December. He stated ballistics showed that the gun used in those incidents was the same one used in several crimes over the years. He also stated that there continues to be a steady uptick in auto thefts and urged everyone to always be mindful about leaving their vehicles unattended even for a minute, with the keys in the ignition. He also suggested having tracking devices installed as a means of recovering the vehicles once they've been stolen.

Another disturbing issue the officers addressed was scam calls which, they said, were also on the rise. Officer Woods stated that scammers were employing more sophisticated ruses to defraud people and explained some ways in which crooks are able to hoodwink their victims. He said they would call, text, send emails or even show up in person and warned that scammers' requests are always urgent about a prize someone had won or a problem that they have.

Woods shared tips on how the community could protect themselves from being victimized. He said they should never respond to unknown calls or texts and advised they create a password the family could use to determine if a caller is legit. He also stressed the importance of being aware of your surroundings when out and revealed that there had been incidents where thieves, on mopeds, sped by crowds at a bus stop, snatched a cell phone and fled before anyone even realized what was happening. He also advised that when anyone calls to report a crime in progress that they provide a call-back number as that gives law enforcement on the scene a means of being able to corroborate specific information obtained during the call.

Officer Delgado distributed several flyers with additional safety tips from NYPD. Resource materials from local elected officials, State Senators Roxanne Persaud and Simcha Felder, Assemblywoman Monique Chandler-Waterman and Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse, were also handed out.

To report a scam or to obtain more information regarding scams, call the NYPD at 646-610-SCAM or 646-610-7226.



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Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

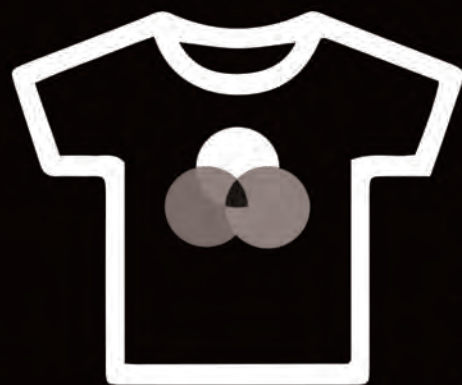
A NYC Transit Bus with the destination sign "Not In Service" says it all. It was published in separate news stories on migrants not wanting to stay at the new Floyd Bennett Field shelter in both the *NY Post* and *NY Daily News* on November 13th.

The MTA has been incurring costs for two years, most recently to Floyd Bennett Field, using newer buses to move migrants around town. Who is paying for the drivers' salaries, fueling, maintenance, washing and interior cleaning? It costs NYC Transit \$218 per hour to run each bus. These buses are also accumulating mileage, adding to straight line depreciation of the equipment value. How many buses are being used daily? Are commuters being deprived of this newer equipment?

Why doesn't NYC Transit use older buses out of the spare or reserve fleets instead? Are any of the buses funded by the Federal Transit Administration? If so, prior approval by FTA is required when equipment is used for incidental use such as this rather than open door service available to the general public. The MTA or United States Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, City or State Comptroller should look into this waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayers' dollars on behalf of commuters.

Sincerely,
Larry Penner

(Larry Penner is a transportation advocate, historian and writer who previously served as a former Director for the Federal Transit Administration Region 2 New York Office of Operations and Program Management.)



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Merchants Association Holds Fourth Annual MLK Jr. Day of Service

Thank you to all merchants, Councilwoman Narcisse, Canarsie Community Development Inc., Brooklyn Chamber, Oak Street Health, Flossy Organization, PaleFo Cinema, P.S. 276 Girl Scout Troop and Beraca Community Development Corp. for making the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event on Monday, January 15th, a success.

Clean and Green streets along the commercial corridors are one of our top priorities, as we believe that a clean and inviting streetscape is essential to attracting and retaining businesses and residents. We also believe that it is important to share our mission with local merchants and community members so that they can understand the importance of keeping our streets clean and green.

During the day of service, we were able to plant daffodil bulbs in 18 street tree gardens along our Marathon Clean and Green route. These daffodils will bloom in February and March, adding color to our streets and creating a more welcoming environment for everyone. We also added mulch to 15 street trees along the same route, which will help to keep the soil moist and the roots of the trees healthy. We are committed to making our streets clean and green, and we believe that these efforts will make a positive difference in our community.

On Rockaway Parkway, we were finally able to hang the Greenest Block in Brooklyn Recognition plaque between Conklin and Flatlands Avenues near Classic Barber. This plaque is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the merchants of this block, who have worked tirelessly to keep the community clean and green. They are an inspiration to us all, and we hope that their example will encourage others to continue these efforts.

During these events, merchants have the chance to network and focus on the community's needs. We added extra steps to our exercise routines and enjoyed the fresh, clean and cold air. Winter in Canarsie provided an opportunity for the community to volunteer and spend time outdoors while community partners worked together on an initiative that benefits everyone.

MLK Jr. would have been 95 years old

on the 15th, and we continue his legacy of service by hosting the annual event and reminding the community that if we can work together even on challenging initiatives, we can make change.

We leave you with this quote - "Courage is an inner resolution to go forward despite obstacles" – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Courtesy of Canarsie Merchants Association



An organization in Brooklyn is seeking sealed bids for the sale and installation of security related enhancements. The project includes for the sale and installation of anti-blast film, a lockdown system, intercom with access controls, and public address system. The selection criteria will be based on prior experience, adherence to projected work schedule, and cost. Specifications and bid requirements can be obtained by contacting us by emailing 137146bp@gmail.com "All interested firms will be required to sign the proposal documents and provide a primary contact, telephone, and email address. Bids will be accepted until February 1st , 2024 Minority and Women Owned Businesses are encouraged to apply.

A nonprofit organization in Brooklyn, NY is seeking sealed bids for the sale and installation of security related enhancements. This project includes the installation of Vehicle Barriers (bollards or planters), Perimeter Fencing, Impact Resistant Doors, and a CCTV System. Additional bids are being requested for Security Guard firms. Selection criteria will be based on price, reputation/experience, and quality of materials proposed. Specifications and bid requirements can be obtained by contacting us at ivdurfpsec@gmail.com. All interested firms will be required to sign for the proposal documents and provide primary contact, telephone, fax and email address. Bids will be accepted until 12 pm February 15, 2024. Work is to commence by March 4, 2024 and completed by October 1, 2024. Minority and Women Owned Businesses are Encouraged to Apply.

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A Resounding “No” for the “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” at CB18 Meeting

By Linda Steinmuller

Board members and elected officials made it loud and clear that they did not want any part of the “City of Yes for Economic Opportunity” at the January 17th meeting of Community Board 18 (CB18). Although it was a bone-chilling, frigid night, residents came out in force to express their opposition of a plan that they say will ruin the character of one of the last suburban neighborhoods in Brooklyn.

Before the public hearing for City of Yes began, Naomi Hopkins, the new chairperson for CB18, introduced herself to the audience, thanking board members for their support. This was followed by a City Council citation presented to Michael Ien, who served as chairperson since 2021. Hopkins called up Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse, past chairpersons and the executive board to thank Ien for his outstanding service.

Representatives from the Department of City Planning (DCP) gave a presentation on the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity

at the November 15th meeting of CB18. They said the proposal, if approved, would increase opportunities for small businesses with “flexible” zoning. With four goals, and 18 proposals to digest, along with technical difficulties, there were a lot of unanswered questions, so the board requested that the DCP team return at a later date to give a second presentation (see “‘City of Yes’ Proposal Put on Hold,” *Canarsie Courier*, November 23, 2023).

Kyra Cuevas, Senior Borough Planner at DCP, told attendees, “Because zoning has not been updated in more than 60 years, there are outdated and sometimes confusing or counterproductive regulations.”

Economic Opportunity is one of three citywide initiatives, Cuevas said, to modernize and update the city’s zoning regulations to support small businesses. With 2,470 storefronts in CB18, and a 10% vacancy rate, “the proposed zoning changes would make it easier to fill empty storefronts by giving businesses more certainty on where they can locate and what they can do with their space,” she said.

If approved, one of the proposals would permit commercial activities to be expanded to upper floors of existing businesses. Another proposal would permit corner stores in residential areas, including commercial space on NYCHA properties.

A cabaret law that was repealed in 2017 created restrictions on music, dancing and comedy shows in some restaurants and bars. New zoning regulations would simplify the

rules based on the size of the venue rather than the activity.

Amusements (like trampoline parks, indoor skydiving and arcades) could be located on a small scale in neighborhood commercial corridors, rather than being limited to Coney Island and the city’s industrial areas.

Since the pandemic, more people are working from home. City of Yes would lift restrictions that currently prohibit certain occupations, like barbers and interior decorators, from running a home-based business.

Following the presentation, board members, many of them heads of their neighborhood civics, were given a two-minute time limit to share their thoughts and comments, which were mostly negative.

Frank Seddio expressed discontent that the plan is a one-size-fits-all for the City of New York, not taking into account that our district is very residential and many of the proposals don’t pertain to the area.

And Greg Borruso, a small business owner for 28 years, believes the proposal is deregulatory and would overwhelm our neighborhoods. “Right now, there is no law enforcement. The only thing it will allow is more smoke shops and urgent cares!”

Along with presentation handouts, DCP provided a summary sheet for the full proposal, which is 1,157 pages long – Assemblywoman Jaime Williams brought the extensive document to the meeting, tied neatly in a gold ribbon.

“You brought a packet, but Jaime brought

the full proposal – 1,157 pages; there’s no way anyone could vote yes for a proposal that has this much heft to it,” Borruso said.

Sal Calise echoed his sentiments. “How can community board members who are all volunteers be expected to vote on this package when they can’t understand a 1,157-page document or if they are being misled by city planning about the details contained in that packet? I don’t know if the wool is being pulled over my eyes!”

Armed with an applicability map outlining every location that could be transformed into a corner store, Paul Curiale said the restrictions in place today are for good reason. “Look at all the corners; how do you explain this?”

Others, like Joan Gilbert and Kenny Jean-Baptiste, shared their concerns that commercial activity on upper floors could be a fire hazard as well as a public safety concern, suggesting if a business gets robbed on an upper floor, it’s harder for police officers to reach the destination.

Rob Mazzuchin, an attorney, pointed out that the proposal would allow your neighbor to use 49% of his property for commercial use and have up to three employees. “I don’t know if anybody saw a slide of the 20 cars waiting to go into that business in the neighbor’s house.”

He expressed his concern that no negative points were brought up. “It sounds like propaganda. You guys want this without giving us an opportunity to understand what it is. You talk about studies that were done



The 1,157-page City of Yes for Economic Opportunity proposal.



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— what studies will be done for the infrastructure, the sewers, the sinking ground in Canarsie?”

Eugene Burshtein likes the fact that we live in a suburban area. “We come here because we want to be away from all the action. Everybody has cars; no one wants congested neighborhoods.”

Others labelled it “neighborhood suicide” and stated that no one wants higher commercial use in CB18.

Once the board members were done with their comments, elected officials made some pretty strong statements in opposition to the proposal.

Assemblywoman Jaime Williams said, “You talk about environmental impact. I’m still waiting for an environmental impact study for Floyd Bennett Field!”

Her office has circulated a petition in opposition to City of Yes that has already garnered close to 1,000 signatures. Stating that she is fed up with the rhetoric in this city and that we are the last of the suburban communities in NYC, in Brooklyn, she told the packed room of residents, “We are residential. We live here. Our community is not broken. Who are you to come in and



Attorney Paul Graziano urging the board to vote “No” on the “City of Yes.”

tell us what we need? We are a community of ‘No.’”

She said that low-density neighborhoods are being targeted and blamed for what is happening in the city. “You should make it a caveat to preserve residential communities like ours, to preserve generational wealth and green spaces, and put citizens first.”

Councilwoman Farah Louis agreed. “The lack of ability for DCP and intent to preserve what we have is disheartening. We moved here because we didn’t want it to be changed. We love the way it looks.”

The comments finished up with a special guest, Paul Graziano, who is an urban planner and land use expert for 30 years. Graziano is well-versed on the subject, having read the 1,157-page proposal three times backwards and forwards.

“This [proposal] was not done with you or with professionals like myself. It was done in consultation with big business, just like the housing piece was done in consultation with the biggest developers and construction companies in New York City,” Graziano explained.

“What they are proposing will be devastating to all of our communities...the housing piece will be a nuclear bomb.”

Although last week’s meeting only addressed the economic portion of the City of Yes, Graziano said, “The problem is that while it is divided into two separate proposals, they are very intertwined with each other.”

“This is a planning commission that is bent on deregulating housing and com-

mercial development in New York City. The City of Yes is a City of Chaos, a city of destroying our communities.”

He continued by saying that many of the 18 proposals are what he calls “puppy dog and ice cream,” meaning that they present the best case scenario, not the worst case. “We are always concerned about the worst case because that’s what always happens to our communities.”

A vote was taken, and all 38 community board members in attendance voted a resounding “No” against the City of Yes!

A new application for an “adult-use retail dispensary premises license” for Kosher Cannabis LLC, 2346 Flatbush Avenue, was voted down by members of the board. A kosher dispensary must grow all of its products organically, using no chemicals or fertilizers, and certified rabbis oversee the production of all edibles. This is the fourth application that was brought before the board, but the first one that was not approved.

In CB18 District Manager Sue Ann Partnow’s monthly update, she said that there were three fatalities from fire in January alone and that education, and proper handling and storage for lithium batteries, is important. She recommended calling 311 if you know of a business that is improperly storing lithium batteries.

Partnow announced that Mayor Adams is holding Town Hall meetings across the city and will be visiting CB18 at the end of February or beginning of March (such date to be announced).

There were 309 complaints to the DEP in CB18, including water main breaks, leaks and clogged sewers. Partnow suggested that residents make their complaints to 311 first and then call the community board office with the 311 reference number.

Street lights along Bergen Avenue, between Avenue K and Ralph Avenue, have been replaced, and traffic signals were installed at Schenectady Avenue and Avenue L, as well as East 105th Street and Avenue J. Partnow requested a survey of curved streets in Mill Island “for purposes of signage to let drivers know that the upcoming streets have a severe curve. There have been accidents and one fatality on one of the streets.

Construction of Select Bus Service along Kings Highway has begun with the replacement of water mains. There are some ongoing water shutdowns, but only for a few hours a day.

The next meeting of CB18 will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28th, at 1097 Bergen Avenue (one week later due to the holiday week).



Rob Mazzuchin, president of Marine Park Community Association, holds up the hefty proposal he and other board members oppose.

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East Flatbush

Food for the Soul: Author Hosts a Freedom Celebration Literacy Event for Haitian Independence

By Melissa Billie Clark

For centuries, different cultures have embraced food as a part of their heritage. Four-time author Ruth Fleury of Scholars of Tomorrow Publishing and Justine A.P. Louis from VivLiv Books hosted a Freedom Day Celebration on Saturday, January 20th, where community members gathered at the Miracle Event Venue, at 1214 Nosstrand Avenue, for a book launch and some traditional Haitian cuisine.

Children listened to Fleury read her latest book, *Soup Joumou: Freedom Celebration*. Singer and songwriter Stachy Saint-Gerard sang her original song, "Hey Siri," and artists from Ti Tonton's father and son duo, Dimitri and Eitan Beaulieu, exhibited their art and love for the Haitian community. Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse was also in attendance to show her support.

Fleury's latest book tells the history of Independence Day, which was celebrated on January 1st; she also incorporates how a well-known soup, "Joumou," is partaken on this special day – a soup that only slave masters in the early 1800s were permitted to eat. Now, this soup represents freedom. Consisting of beef, squash, potatoes, cabbage, and other healthy herbs and spices, this soup will remind readers why Fleury keeps her Haitian heritage alive. She told the *Canarsie Courier*, "Our ancestors left a great legacy for us – their resilience in fighting for us. We have to keep fighting;

quitting is not an option. There is a light at the end of the tunnel."

What shines so bright on Haitian-Americans today are all the trials and tribulations some of them went through, such as Toussaint L'Ouverture, who was born as a slave in the former French Colony. Haiti is considered the first black republic for both freedom and abolishing slavery on January 1, 1804. Fleury's book and her colleague Louis' book, *Dalia Explores the Haitian Creole Alphabet*, provides all the resources you need to learn about Haiti and its culture. What inspired Fleury to start writing children's books was being an educator for about 15 years; she was motivated by the children in her life and the students throughout her career and wanted to help them achieve and succeed. She explained, "Some kids are diagnosed as hyper-energetic and labeled as bad. Once a student is labeled as bad or hyper, you lose them, and they are no longer interested in learning. I feel like the outcome will be successful once we change that narrative and provide them with the need for our support." She wrote a book, *Hyper Kid, So They Say!*, to help others understand how an energetic child is often misunderstood.

If you would like to learn more about Ruth Fleury and how to purchase her books, visit scholarsoftomorrowpublishing.com.

Photos courtesy of Ruth Fleury



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CUNY Announces Interim Presidential Appointments For Kingsborough Community College and York College

The City University of New York (CUNY) announced the appointment of highly accomplished leaders with long ties to CUNY to serve as interim presidents of two of its colleges. Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez named Suri Duitch to lead Kingsborough Community College, filling a vacancy that opened when President Claudia V. Schrader was appointed interim president of York College last month.

The appointment of Duitch, a two-time CUNY alumna with a distinguished career that includes more than 12 years in leadership roles at the University, will be effective January 29th, pending approval by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Until then, Dr. Joanne Russell, Kingsborough's senior vice president of academic affairs and provost, will act as the officer in charge. Schrader's appointment,

approved by the board in December, was effective January 8th.

"With the appointments of Dr. Schrader and Dr. Duitch, I'm confident that our Kingsborough and York campus communities will continue to have strong and enthusiastic leadership in a time of transition," said Chancellor Rodríguez. "President Schrader had an extremely successful tenure at Kingsborough and will keep York on its upward trajectory. Dr. Duitch's extensive experience and deep institutional knowledge of CUNY will be valuable assets to Kingsborough. I thank them both for taking on these important roles."

Duitch's appointment at Kingsborough brings her back to CUNY after serving seven years as the dean and vice president for academic innovation at the Tulane University School of Professional

Advancement, a role in which she collaborated with faculty, staff and students and oversaw an overhaul of the school's mission, constitution and services. The initiatives she led added degree programs and a significant number of full-time faculty, enhanced online and hybrid courses, and introduced strategies to support underrepresented populations.

"I look forward to returning to CUNY and to Brooklyn, and most of all, to the tremendous opportunity to join the Kingsborough community and help to shape it for its next stage of greatness," Duitch said. "I have long admired the school for its excellence and effectiveness in providing transformative educational opportunities to the diverse communities of New York."

Schrader has held leadership positions at three CUNY colleges over 20 years and became the first African-American president in Kingsborough's 55-year history when she was appointed in 2018. Her appointment follows the departure of Berenecea Johnson Eanes, who was named president of California State University, Los Angeles, after four years as president of York.

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Senator Persaud Convenes Youth Roundtable on Internet Safety

On Thursday, January 11th, State Senator Roxanne Persaud hosted a youth roundtable discussion with middle school students from Senate District 19. Eighteen students from grades 5-8 joined the senator in an insightful dialogue about "Youth Safety and Dignity in Online Spaces," held in P.S./I.S. 66's gym, at 845 East 96th Street.

Students from P.S./I.S. 66, Liberty Avenue Middle School, Fredrick Douglass Academy, Riverdale Avenue Middle School, J.H.S. 292 Margaret S. Douglas, J.H.S. 218 James P. Sinnott and M.S. 935 welcomed Senator Persaud along with Councilman Chris Banks (District 42), who briefly stopped by to greet students and staff.

The panel discussion commenced with Persaud welcoming students, staff and other distinguished guests, bringing attention to the topic of internet safety. "What

does internet safety mean to you?" she asked as she opened the discussion. Students went on to share their experiences using the internet, citing concerns like "bullying" and social media "gossip" as things they have experienced and are learning to navigate.

During the second half of the panel discussion, students were joined in conversation by experts in the fields of law, mental health and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Guests included Michelle Gall, Founder and Executive Director of Digital Girl; Renee Gregory, Chief of Diversity and Inclusion at the Kings County District Attorney's Office; Dr. Akeem Marsh, Medical Director at NY Foundling's Home of Integrated Behavioral Health; Angela Pinsky, Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy at Google New York; Det. Bryan Quinn from

the NYPD Special Investigations Division; and Police Officers Mayfield and Meneses from the 69th Precinct. Each panelist shared their experiences working in their respective fields, advised students on internet safety and lent their ears to thoughtful questions from students on the panel and in the audience.

Senator Persaud's roundtable discussion highlighted, from the voices of the youth, what young kids today face when it comes to the wide and sometimes uncharted world of the internet. The discussion bridged a gap between young people and those in places that can advocate and provide resources to get the best out of online spaces while navigating the unfortunate reality of internet harm.

*Courtesy of State Senator Roxanne Persaud's Office
Photos by Baqir Ahmad*



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Notice of Formation of Studio David Spector L.L.C.. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 2023-04-07. Office location: Kings County. SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to David Spector: 830 Putnam Ave Apt 2b Brooklyn NY 11221. Purpose: Any lawful purpose

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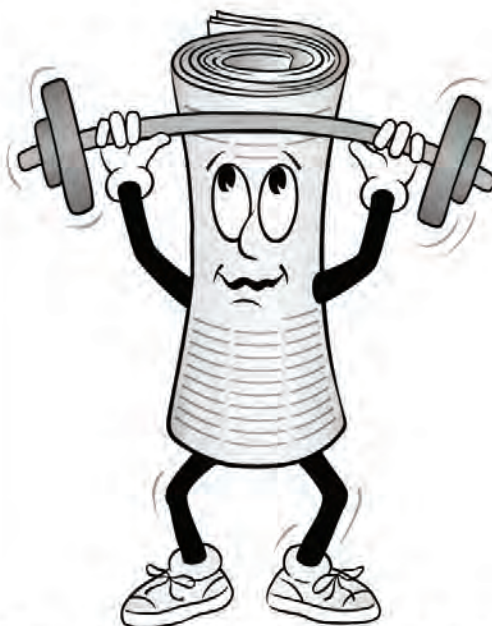
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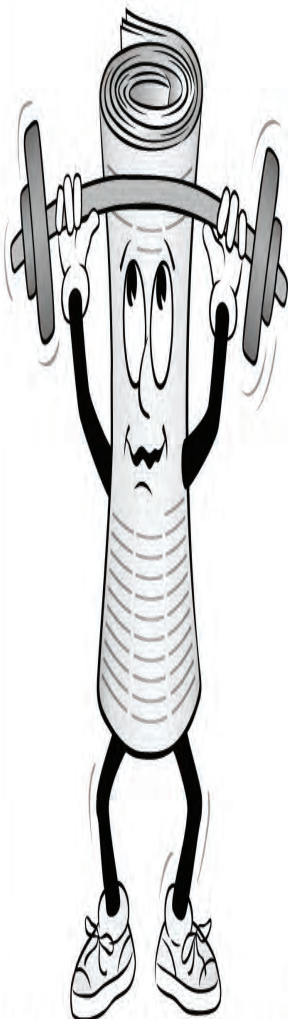
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