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Photo by Linda Steinmuller

Story on pages 16, 17



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Local Innovation, Global Recognition: The Flossy Flies to SXSW

By Jibreel Jalloh

Exciting news for Canarsie: The Flossy Organization, a nonprofit rooted in our community, has been selected as a finalist for the 2025 SXSW Pitch competition. This prestigious event, part of the South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference and Festivals held annually in Austin, Texas, provides a global platform for startups to present their innovative ideas to industry leaders, investors and changemakers.

Founded in 1987, SXSW has transformed from a regional music festival into a renowned convergence of the tech, film and music industries. The upcoming 2025 conference is scheduled from March 7th to 15th. A highlight of the event is the SXSW Pitch competition, now in its 17th year, which showcases cutting-edge technology and creative projects from around the world.

On March 10, 2025, during the SXSW Innovation Awards Ceremony at the Austin Convention Center, entrepreneur and investor Mark Cuban will be inducted into the SXSW Hall of Fame. This honor recognizes individuals whose work has significantly shaped the connected world and continues to guide the direction of the digital industry. Notable past speakers include President Barack Obama, who addressed the festival in 2016.

The Flossy Organization was established to bridge the advocacy gap in



marginalized communities, ensuring that residents of Canarsie and beyond have the tools to shape their futures. Through intergenerational civic training, technology and grassroots mobilization, we empower our community to address pressing issues such as gun violence prevention and transit equity.

Being selected as a finalist at SXSW Pitch signifies that our innovative approach is gaining recognition on a global stage. This opportunity could bring valuable resources, partnerships and investments back to Canarsie.

To learn more about SXSW and its events, visit their official website at

sxsw.com.

Jibreel Jalloh is an award-winning organizer with experience working at the highest levels of government. He is the Founder and Executive Director of The Flossy Organization, a nonprofit dedicated to closing the advocacy gap through education and activism. Over the past few years, they have worked to end gun violence, increase transit options and secure investments in local green spaces. Jibreel recently won the prestigious Obama Foundation Scholar award at Columbia University. You can learn more at theflossy.org and follow @theflossyorg.

Proposed Casino in Coney Island Proves Controversial

By Angela G. Nannetti

Coney Island has always been Brooklyn's playground; its three miles of sandy beaches, historic attractions like the Riegelmann Boardwalk, Steeplechase Pier, landmark Parachute Jump, and iconic amusement parks and eateries have charmed generations of visitors from every corner of the borough and beyond for more than a century. While the neighborhood has undergone numerous transformations throughout the years, its biggest yet may be on the horizon.

A consortium of developers have proposed a 1,431,730 square-foot facility, called "The Coney," which would include a massive casino, a hotel, an acre of public park space, on-site parking, retail and restaurant space, built on five acres of privately held, mostly vacant, land near Stillwell Avenue. Before being granted a gaming license by the New York State Gaming Commission, the developers, who are vying with several other competitors, must first gain the approval of two-thirds of a Community Advisory Committee, composed of elected officials. It is unclear at this point if the developers of The Coney will be able to gain such strong support, seeing as there are very strong opinions on both sides of the argument.

On Wednesday, January 22nd, Community Board 13 voted down the developer's proposal (24 to 11) to close part of Bowery Street and purchase air rights that would allow

them to construct sky bridges to connect their structures over other buildings. It certainly appears that the majority of the board and large swaths of the immediate community seem to be in opposition to the development, citing changes to the landscape, congestion, traffic, parking, gentrification and historical loss as major issues. Residents of other, more distant neighborhoods, like those in our coverage area, however, seem to be more open to the idea of a local casino.

"I don't see the problem," Harry from Starrett City said. "It means union jobs, and everybody needs those right now. It's only going to

bring that area up."

John in Mill Basin was less concerned about the jobs and more interested in the prospect of local gambling. "Me and my wife love blackjack. We go to Wind Creek Bethlehem (in Pennsylvania), but it's a drive, so we only do it once or twice a month. If it was in Brooklyn, we might have to take out a second mortgage on the house," he said, possibly in jest.

Until the matter is resolved later this year, the fate of Coney Island will continue to hang in the balance.

Rendering of "The Coney" from theconeynyc.com.



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East Flatbush

Pair of Teens Shot – One Dead, One Stable

By Lloyd Mitchell

One teen is dead and another wounded after a shooting on an East Flatbush street on Tuesday, January 28th.

Officers from the 67th Precinct responded to 80 East 93rd Street, between Rutland Road and East New York Avenue, around 3:30 p.m. where they observed a 15-year-old male, later identified as Heath Campbell, with a gunshot wound to the head in the lobby of the building. Paramedics brought him to Kings County Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

A few minutes later, officers found a 16-year-old male with a gunshot wound to the right shoulder on

the third floor of the building. The victim was taken to Brookdale Hospital in stable condition.

The motive behind the shooting is unknown as of press time.

No arrests have been made, and an investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this shooting 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 X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



East Flatbush

Community Groups Call for Action Following Double Shooting

By Lloyd Mitchell

Anti-gun violence groups rallied around the family of Heath Campbell, 15, at a Prayer Vigil, held at East 93rd Street and Rutland Road, on Wednesday, January 29th — just one day after he was fatally shot in the lobby of 80 East 93rd Street.

The youngster was pronounced dead at Kings County Hospital after a fatal gunshot to his head. A 16-year-old male was also found with a gunshot wound to his shoulder on the building's third floor that same night. He was listed in stable condition.

Members of The God Squad prayed for the Campbell family.

"All victims were young, Black males, and these senseless acts of gun violence have left a deep scar on our community," The God Squad wrote in a press release. "In the wake of these tragedies, our God Squad Clergy and Project ECHO teams, part of our community-based Cure Violence initiative, immediately mobilized to provide on-the-ground support to the victims' families at local hospitals. These dedicated teams have been offering emotional support to help families cope with the immense trauma and grief they are enduring."

The deceased's mother and father, Joy Smith Campbell and Lonzo Campbell, attended the rally, asking for the community's help in solving the tragic homicide.

"I want someone to speak up and say something," Lonzo said. "It will help bring us closure."

The victim's mother added that Heath had been a good kid and lamented that his future was cut short.

"He was a smart kid and getting good grades; he loved to play video games and loved to harass his brother, who turned 18 on January 30th," Smith Campbell said. "He won't have the ability to celebrate many milestones in life."

Assemblywoman Monique Chandler-Waterman also attended the vigil, stating, "I am tired of asking the city for resources for these kids."

The family had just moved to the area from Queens two years ago.

Anyone with information regarding this shooting 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 X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



East Flatbush

Elderly Man Shot In Broad Daylight

By Lloyd Mitchell

A man is expected to recover after being shot in the vicinity of Martense Street and Bedford Avenue on Monday, January 27th.

Officers from the 67th Precinct responded to the scene around 12:30 p.m. where they discovered a 70-year-old man suffering from a gunshot wound to his shoulder. Police said the unidentified shooter fled in an unknown direction.

EMS took the victim to Kings County Hospital, where

he's listed in stable condition, according to police.

No arrests have been made, and an investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information regarding this shooting 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 X @NYPDTips. All calls are strictly confidential.



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Canarsie's Junior Olympian Qualifies for 'Fastest Kid in the World' Race

By Amanda Salazar



Benjamin Jerome Mack Cartwright Jr. qualifies for the Millrose Games.

BJ has earned around 60 medals since September 2023.

The fastest kid in Canarsie has qualified for the "Youth Boys' (U-8) Fastest Kid in the World" 55-meter race at Manhattan's Millrose Games, an annual indoor track and field competition for all ages, to be held on February 6th through 8th at The Armory.

Eight-year-old Benjamin Jerome Mack Cartwright, Jr., affectionately known as BJ, has been running since September 2023 and has since amassed about 60 gold and silver medals — so many that his grandfather, Donohue Nelson, said they can fill their own room (see "Canarsie Jr. Olympian Goes for the Gold," *Canarsie Courier*, August 1, 2024). Cartwright, a 3rd-grader at Canarsie Ascend Lower School, located at 9719 Flatlands Avenue, even achieved the title of Junior Olympian for his speedy runs at competitions.

Now, he has the opportunity to win another gold medal and the title of fastest kid in the world at the Millrose Games on Saturday, February 8th.

"It feels great because it's a great accomplishment," Cartwright said in an interview. "For a young age, it's a great success."

Nelson feels the same way. The proud grandfather takes Cartwright to his practices and to track meets all over the country, cheering the honor roll student on.

"It means everything for me," Nelson said. "He is humble . . . He doesn't let it get to him; he's still like a normal kid."

The irony of Cartwright's success is that he didn't even want to run track — he wanted to play soccer. He was playing soccer and doing well until his coach seemingly disappeared, never to reach out to Nelson or Cartwright again.

After that, Nelson hired coach Tabatha Gibbs of the Dashing Dons and Divas running club to train Cartwright. He found her through a friend's recommendation. At first, Gibbs reported that Cartwright didn't seem interested in the sport, as he wanted to return to soccer. Eventually, though, he came around.

"It's a fun sport," Cartwright said. "And most of the time I tire myself out from running, so my grandparents thought it would be a good idea to put me in track."

For Nelson, it's about more than just tiring out his grandson, who lives with him and his wife. It's about fulfilling his own childhood aspiration of being an athlete, which he never had the opportunity to achieve.

"For him, I'd do anything," he said. "I'll do anything for him. I had all the potential that he has right now. I had all of that, but I did not have the parents behind me to help and stuff like that. So, I see myself in him and I'm trying to do everything to make sure that he succeeds in whatever he is doing."

Photos courtesy of the Nelson family



The 3rd-grader is a Junior Olympian.

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Marine Park

Celebrating Black History Month with Textile Arts



By Brian Moreno

Residents of all ages gathered at the Carmine Carro Community Center in Marine Park on Saturday morning, February 1st, to partake in a Textile Arts Workshop and learn about Adinkra symbols.

Organized by the Marine Park Alliance, with assistance from Brooklyn College, Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse (District 46), and others, the Black History Month event was not only about expressing yourself artistically and creating crafts, but also learning about another culture. The workshop was curated by Dr. Myra Brown Green, an art historian/consultant and professor at Medgar Evers College.

"This event is open to everyone who had an interest, but was also an opportunity for them to learn a bit about African history, particularly the symbols that are mentioned," Dr. Simanique Moody, assistant professor at Brooklyn College, said. Dr. Moody helped organize the event, as well as a Kwanzaa ceremony in 2024 (see "Celebrating Kwanzaa with Dancing, Joy and Unity," *Canarsie Courier*, December 26, 2024). "In any case, I reached out to Dr. Myra Brown Green about it, and she responded and was very excited about it."

Dr. Brown Green explained the significance of Adinkra symbols, which represent concepts, proverbs and aphorisms and are found in fabrics, logos and pottery.

"The Adinkra are proverbial symbols," Dr. Brown Green said. "They're centuries old, proverbial symbols from the Ashanti people of West Ghana. The Gye Nyame means there's no power greater than the Most High; whoever you serve, it means omnipotence. The symbols mean different things; they're proverbs. Another example is of these crocodiles sharing the same stomach (Funtunfunefu-Denkyemfunefu), which means unity."

There are more than 200 Adinkra symbols and each one has its significance. One symbol, Nsoromma, resembles a star and stands for "children of the heavens," representing the belief in a supreme deity and God's guardianship.

Both newcomers and skilled knitters learned something new while honing their knitting skills. They chose from a variety of colorful felt, knitting materials and embroidery thread for their art craft.

"(Arthritis) moves in and does not want to leave; it stays with you, and sometimes I can't even open my fingers," Carol Johnson said. "However, I'm enjoying myself because you have to keep busy. If I don't use or open them up, they'll stiffen."

As people were finishing their projects, Dr. Brown Green emphasized the importance of exploring cultures worldwide and the need to celebrate Black History not only for one month of the year.

"We're happy to kick off Black History Month right on February 1st with our Textile Arts Workshop with Dr. Myra Brown Green," MPA Executive Director Scott Middleton said. We're pleased to see so many people turn out from the Brooklyn Quilters Guild, the Flossy Organization, Canarsie and the Marine Park Young Adults Association, and we're happy that everyone came and took the opportunity to learn about Adinkra symbols from Dr. Brown Green."

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Flatbush

Clarendon Library Reopens

Councilwoman Farah Louis joined Brooklyn Public Library President Linda Johnson and students from P.S. 361 at the official reopening of the Clarendon Library, at 2305 Nostrand Avenue, on Monday, January 27th.

"Today is a momentous occasion for the residents of Flatbush and East Flatbush as we celebrate the reopening of the Clarendon Library — a cherished institution that has stood as a pillar of our community for over 100 years," Louis said. "After months of tireless advocacy and collaboration, we are thrilled to see this vital resource back in service months ahead of schedule."

The library has been refurbished with a new HVAC and fire alarm system, making the building safe and comfortable for patrons. Visitors will also enjoy new furniture and an updated information desk and checkout area. The exterior of the building was upgraded with new seating, planting beds, lighting, power and a custom wood book drop, allowing patrons to return books 24/7.

Residents have long-awaited the return of the Clarendon Library, an essential resource for the community.

"The journey to this day has not been easy. For far too long, families in our district were without access to this library — a lifeline for literacy programs, educational workshops and a

safe space for growth," Louis said. "As the only library within walking distance for many in my district, the closure of the Clarendon Library was a loss of opportunity for learning, connection and empowerment."

"This achievement would not have been possible without the incredible leadership of Linda Johnson, president of the Brooklyn Public Library, whose advocacy for these institutions has been unwavering," Louis said. "I also extend my deepest gratitude to the NYC Department of Design and Construction for their partnership in addressing challenges and ensuring that the reopening was expedited."

She also thanked residents for their patience, advocacy and unwavering commitment.

Photo Credit: John McCarten/NYC Council Media Unit



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Assemblywoman Monique Chandler-Waterman Takes Oath and Offers Love

By Brenda Cox

The auditorium of Holy Family Church, 9719 Flatlands Avenue, was filled to capacity on the evening of February 1st, as hundreds of constituents showed up for the Inauguration Gala hosted in honor of Assemblywoman Monique Chandler-Waterman (AD 58).

The evening was filled with entertainment, beginning with the entry of the assemblywoman who was accompanied by the marching band from the Middle School of Media Law and Fine Arts, followed by honor guards from P. S. 135.

A melodious rendition of the National Anthem by Hilton Samuel added to the atmosphere as did the performance by P. S./I. S.109 student Raven Boyce, who sang Nina Simone's "Feeling Good." Other entertainment included presentations by Meyer Levin's steelpan orchestra and dance routines by Arts in Blue and P. S./I. S. 66 step team.

In attendance were community leaders and elected officials including Senate Minority Leader, Charles Schumer, who stepped onto the stage with a dance of his own. Looking around the jam-packed room, he commented, "It's a cold Saturday night and this room is SRO – standing room only. What a tribute to Monique!"

He acknowledged former AD 58 Assemblyman Nick Perry, Chandler-Water-

man's predecessor and mentor. Senator Schumer spoke of her accomplishments. "She wasn't born with a silver spoon in her mouth. No one plucked her out of nowhere and said you're going to be assemblymember. She earned it!"

Other dignitaries included State Senator Roxanne Persaud (SD 19) and Assemblywoman Jaime Williams (AD 59) who pledged their continued support to Chandler-Waterman. There was also a multitude of clergy (14), who took turns praying for the assemblywoman.

After taking the Oath of Office, which was administered by Judge Lola Waterman, the assemblywoman delivered her message, which was about "The Oath We Take and The Love We Give." She emphasized showing compassion, love, respect and understanding to all, especially those suffering from mental health issues, experiencing lack of affordable housing or victims of gun violence, to name a few.

Chandler-Waterman reminded everyone, "No matter who is the president, God is in charge. No matter what title we have, we must remember the words of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 'Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.'"

The event ended with a closing prayer by Dr. Charles Galbreath and a sumptuous dinner reception.

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Mill Basin

Doctor Offers Surgery-Free Relief to Chronic Pain Sufferers

By Angela G. Nannetti

In a healthcare industry that has become inundated with physicians who overprescribe pain medication and are all too eager to put patients with chronic pain under the knife, it's refreshing to meet a doctor who takes an entirely different approach. As warm and kind as he is truly brilliant, and tremendously well-informed, Chiropractor and Naturopath, Dr. Anthony Biz, is a breath of fresh air.

Having offered innovative, non-surgical options to patients dealing with chronic back, neck and disc pain, as well as peripheral neuropathy and many other conditions, for nearly three decades, Dr. Biz has an incredible wealth of knowledge and is continuously seeking to enhance his proficiency through fellowships, accreditations and academic workshops. Dr. Biz has undergone rigorous certifications, including becoming nationally certified in spinal decompression, and is renowned as one of the premier doctors specializing in disc injuries and spinal neuropathies.

As director of the Disc Centers of America: Mill Basin, located at 2083 East 65th Street, Dr. Biz is using his expertise to transform the lives of his patients on a daily basis. Through the use of regenerative medicine, and equipped with state-of-the-art spinal decompression equipment like the DRX9000 as well as various cutting edge instruments, including cold lasers, frequency specific micro current, PEMF (Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy), Activator, Arthrostim and VibraCussor, Dr. Biz creates personalized treatment plans that are uniquely suited to each individual patient.

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Dr. Anthony Biz (right) and Office Manager Kari, with the DRX9000.



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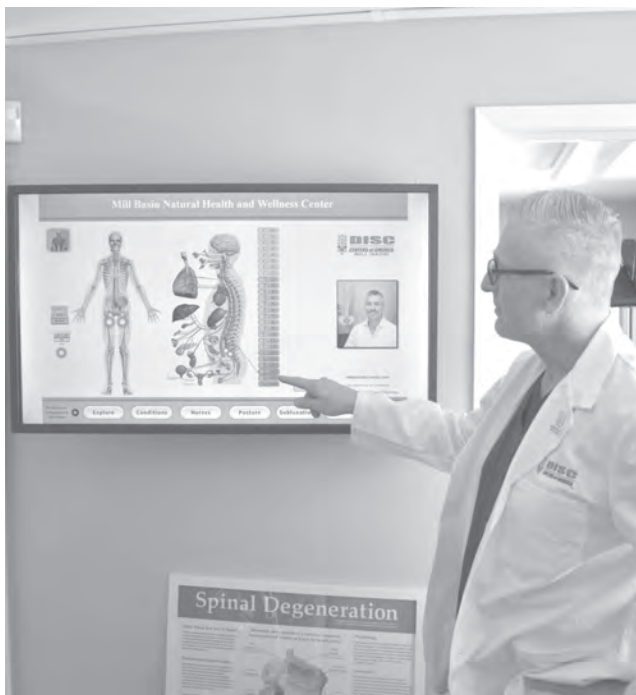
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Dr. Biz illustrating the way disc problems can manifest pain and discomfort in other body parts beyond the immediate area of the affected disc.

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Dr. Martin Luther King Day at JCC of Canarsie

On Monday, January 20th, a very exciting Martin Luther King Day took place at the Jewish Community Council (JCC) of Canarsie, located at 1170 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Over 90 individuals participated in packing bountiful food parcels for dozens of needy and disadvantaged families from the East New York and Starrett City area. Special thanks to Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado, State Senator Roxanne Persaud and Councilman Chris Banks, as well as many of their staff members who actively participated in the well-attended event.

A high point of the day was a beautiful choral rendition by Brooklyn College students. Kudos to UJA-Federation for funding all of the refreshments and thousands of pounds of healthy foods, which were distributed.

Rabbi Avrohom Hecht, executive director of the JCC, noted: "The spirit of Dr. King continues to live on, when our community unites as one to address food and economic insecurity."

Courtesy of the Jewish Community Council of Canarsie



Rabbi Avrohom Hecht, Councilman Chris Banks, State Senator Roxanne Persaud and Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado

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Consuming Fire Commemorates Black History Month with Spectacular Show

By Brenda Cox

On the first day of February, the month designated for commemorating Black History in the United States, Consuming Fire Ministries International Inc. (CFMII) celebrated the occasion with a spectacular cultural presentation held at P. S. 272 Curtis Estabrook School, located at 101-24 Seaview Avenue.

CFMII Elder Roshone Ault-Lee welcomed everyone to the amazing show, which featured captivating stunts by a troupe of Tanzanian Zuzu acrobats who juggled, formed human pyramids, contorted their bodies to slide under a limbo stick mere inches from the floor and performed several other mesmerizing feats.

There were also stirring musical and vocal renditions of gospel songs such as “Just Tell Jesus,” performed by the Songs of Solomon choir, led by Choir Director, Bishop Dr. Chantel Wright, and “The Name of Jesus, Higher Than Any Other Name,” by Maranatha Confident, Courageous and Committed Youths (MC3Y).

The show was emceed by Love Lee, Daniella Laureano and Zamir Maybry, members of CFMII’s Youth Destined for Greatness (YDG) Children’s Ministry and P. S. 272. Before each performance, one of them read a “Black History Month Fact,” which highlighted accomplishments of black people and their contributions to society.

Some of the notables mentioned were Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., prominent civil rights leader and activist of the 1960’s; Thurgood Marshall, another civil rights activist who became a Supreme Court Justice; Mae Jemison, a NASA astronaut; and Barack Obama, the first black President of the United States.

Bishop Dr. Cheryl Ault-Barker, senior pastor of CFMII, gave opening remarks and also said the benediction. She urged everyone to remain steadfast with their prayers. “In times like these when there is so much fear, when there is so much concern about what is our next move, you don’t have to be afraid,” she announced.

She also reminded everyone with whom ultimate power lies. She stated, “Our source and Commander-in-Chief is Divine. Our source and Commander-in-Chief is Sovereign. So regardless of where you are with your emotions and with your thinking, don’t worry.”

Dr. Barker ended with a scripture verse from Philipians 4:6 – “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”



Songs of Solomon choir singing “Just Tell Jesus” at Black History celebration.

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Zuzu acrobats performing at P.S. 272.

Senator Persaud Hosts Webinar to Demystify Medicare for Seniors

By Angela G. Nannetti

As a longtime advocate for seniors, who has dedicated herself to the service of her constituents for more than a decade, it comes as no surprise that State Senator Roxanne Persaud has set out to ensure that the eldest members of her district have access to all of the benefits they are eligible to receive. In that spirit, she hosted a virtual Medicare information session via Zoom on Thursday, January 30th, to help seniors better navigate the federally-funded health insurance program.

Persaud invited special guest, HIICAP Outreach Volunteer Manager Eric Hausman, from the New York City Department for the Aging, to give attendees an overview of what Medicare is and how it works. Hausman explained that Medicare is health insurance for people aged 65 and older (and sometimes younger people with disabilities) and displayed an example of the familiar red, white and blue ID card seniors receive in the mail after they enroll. He went over how Medicare insurance has two parts: A and B.

Hausman discussed how Part B is mainly for doctor's visits and costs a standard premium of \$185 per month for most people, which is taken directly out of your check if you receive Social Security. It has a \$257 annual deductible (the amount of money you pay before the insurance company starts paying) in 2025. After the deductible is met, Medicare will then pay 80% for covered services, and the insured must pay the remaining 20% co-insurance.

He also discussed Part A, explaining that it is mostly for hospitals and sometimes skilled nursing facilities. "Although most everyone gets Part A for free with no premium, there is a large deductible if you need to be admitted to the hospital," he warned, which is \$1,676 in 2025 (up to a 60-day inpatient stay).


"Let's say, for instance, you have to be admitted to the hospital tomorrow, for five days. Medicare is going to pay everything but this deductible of \$1,676, but what if in the beginning of March you are readmitted? Same condition, different condition, doesn't matter. If less than 60 days have gone by since your discharge, you are still in the same benefit period. You pick up where you left off, at Day Six," Hausman said. "You don't have to meet a new deductible. What if your readmittance happens in May, June or July? Still same calendar year, but now it's a new benefit period. More than 60 days have gone by since your discharge, so they start again, and you are back to Day One of your coverage and you have to meet a new deductible." If you should require skilled nursing to rehab after being discharged from the hospital, Medicare will pay the first 20 days in full.

Hausman also highlighted some of the most common services that are not covered by Medicare, like dental, vision, eyeglasses, hearing aids and more. "I hope this will help point out the importance of people having other insurance besides Medicare," he said, before going over options for Medicare Advantage (Part C), which are private plans contracted with Medicare that cover all of what Medicare pays for plus some services that Medicare does not pay for, sometimes with no additional premium, and Medicare Part D, a voluntary prescription drug coverage benefit that helps pay for the cost of prescription medications.

During the hour-long webinar, which was jam-packed with very useful information, attendees were also given an in-depth look at enrollment, Medicare Savings Plans and much more. To dive deeper, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1163481252016656> where you may access a recording of the entire seminar.



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Sixty-Ninth Precinct to Focus on Flatlands Corridor

By Linda Steinmuller

Although 2025 had a rocky start, Captain Dion Hinds, commanding officer of the 69th Precinct, announced that overall crime was down by almost 8% last year, at the first meeting of the 69th Precinct Community Council, held on Tuesday, January 28th, at the Hebrew Educational Society, 9502 Seaview Avenue.

However, grand larceny was up last year as a result of scams and frauds targeted at the elderly. On the positive side, the captain said, "We did an excellent job last year with Bayview and Breukelen." His officers removed a lot of guns from both housing developments, and as a result, violence decreased dramatically.

Juvenile crime continues to be an issue along the Flatlands Avenue corridor, and Hinds said that that area would be their main focus this year. A heavy presence of officers will be stationed from Glenwood Road to Avenue J, and from Ralph Avenue to East 82nd Street, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., with a concentration by Wendy's, where the majority of kids hang out, and Bilderssee Park (East 81st Street and Flatlands Avenue), which has been the scene of multiple incidents last year and the beginning of this year.

Hinds said that a 57-year-old woman was shot in the leg on Flatlands Avenue and East 81st Street on January 10th; she was on her way home from work and was the unintended target. "Shortly after that, we had an officer-involved shooting a block down from there on Flatlands and East 80," Hinds told attendees.

He urged residents to share any video footage from home surveillance and Ring cameras should a detective knock on your door to investigate a crime.

Hinds presented November Cop of the Month awards to two quick-acting officers who saved a young man's life on November 14, 2024. A citation was also presented by Councilwoman Mercedes Narcisse's office.

A juvenile was stabbed inside Taha Deli, at 8010 Flatlands Avenue. Hinds said that video showed the young man running out of the deli toward East 81st Street. "He falls to the ground ... people stood around but did nothing. There was a lot of blood," he said. "Officers Coleman and Swaby quickly responded. Officer Swaby took out his tourniquet and tied it around the young man's thigh, above the wound. Stops the bleeding. I'm telling you; he saved that young man's life. If it wasn't for Officer Swaby and Officer Coleman, that young man would not be with us today."

There were several updates by elected officials and their representatives, as well as civic and community leaders.

Dumping is an ongoing problem on Avenue K, between Remsen Avenue and East 86th Street.

Community Board 18 District Manager Sue Ann Partnow said Sanitation recently cleaned up the area, which also has a number of abandoned vehicles and tractor trailers that don't belong there, which made it difficult for Sanitation to perform the cleanup. To report dumping and abandoned cars (include make, model and license plate number), contact the community board office; contact information can be found on their website.

The federal government has paused several programs and funding to the states. Jennifer Viechweg-Horsford from State Senator Roxanne Persaud's office said that money that has already been approved will not be affected. She assured attendees, "The senator is taking all measures to ensure we continue to be productive."

Governor Kathy Hochul recently gave her State of the State address. On behalf of Assemblywoman Jaime Williams, Dorothy Lee said that although the assemblywoman agrees with Hochul's sentiments to invest in transportation infrastructure, she cannot forget the negative impact congestion pricing has on New Yorkers. She was pleased that Hochul allocated fund-

ing to increase police presence on subways, enhance border security and support victim services.

Williams is reintroducing legislation to reinstate city employees, like frontline workers and healthcare heroes, who she says were wrongfully terminated due to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

There will be a hiring fair, with a large number of vendors, at Narcisse's District Office, at 5827 Flatlands Avenue, on Wednesday, February 26th, from 4 to 7 p.m.

The councilwoman said that the biggest thing she is fighting for is a community center. She'd like to see a place where teenagers and young adults can go to learn and not just hang out.

"Thanks to the speaker and mayor, \$1.6 million was allocated to address gun violence in the community.

The focus was Bayview, and Bayview is improving tremendously," Narcisse said, also stating that the focus should now be on the Flatlands area, in agreement with Hinds.

To show their appreciation to the community, the 69th Precinct Community Council, and Community Affairs Officers Nicole Rostant and Sammy Maria, are holding a free Valentines Dinner for older adults at Holy Family, 9719 Flatlands Avenue (enter on Conklin Avenue), on Saturday, February 8th, at 4 p.m. This is the third annual event, and it promises to be a great time, with a good DJ and a lot of food. Even though their flyer says "older adults," all are welcome.

The next meeting of the 69th Precinct Community Council will take place on Tuesday, February 25th, at 8 p.m. at the Hebrew Educational Society.

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Never Forget: Officer Cecil Frank Sledge Honored at 45th Anniversary Memorial

By Linda Steinmuller



Members of the Sledge family, NYPD, clergy, elected officials and community members.

Our law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day. Sadly, some of them don't make it home to their families. Police Officer Cecil Frank Sledge made the ultimate sacrifice on January 28, 1980, when he lost his life during a "routine" traffic stop. A Memorial Mass was held on the 45th anniversary of his tragic passing.

Family members, friends, members of the NYPD (active and retired), clergy and elected officials gathered at Holy Family Church, 9719 Flatlands Avenue, to show their support to the family and vowed to never forget the sacrifice Sledge made to protect the residents of the 69th Precinct.

The memorial started off with the singing of "Amazing Grace," followed by a prayer and a Bible reading by Sledge's young grandson, Anthony, who never had the opportunity to meet his grandfather.

Monsignor David Cassato, an NYPD chaplain who has known the Sledge family for decades, spoke about all the beautiful memories he has of the family, including weddings and baptisms he has performed over the years.

"Memories of your father, your husband, your grandfather, your fellow officer," he said. "A promise was made on that day never to forget. Today, we hold that promise. We never forget his life and the sad day Cecil gave his life in service to the city to make Canarsie a better place. He gave his life for love of New York, love of Brooklyn, love for his family."

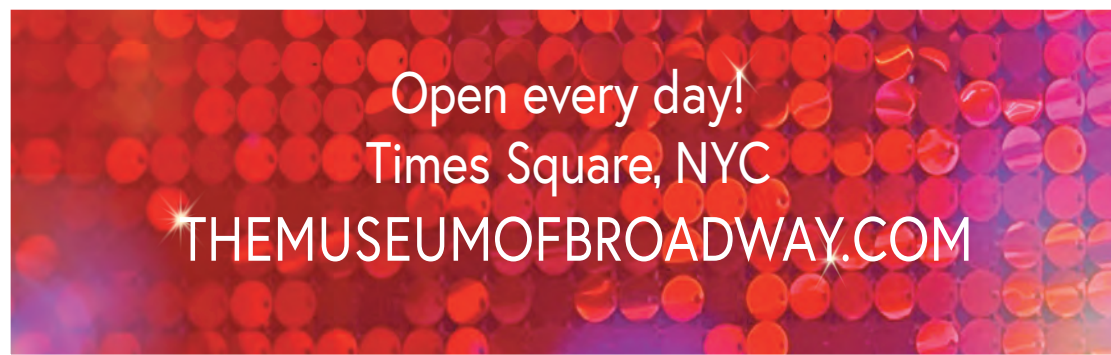
After Sledge's two grandchildren (Anthony and Cecilia) brought the gifts up to the altar, the monsignor remarked, "How proud he must be of his grandchildren bringing up the gifts. How proud he must be from his place in Heaven."

Charles Minch, the deputy chief of Patrol Borough Brooklyn South, made a few remarks. "Forty-five years ago today, Police Officer Cecil Frank Sledge set out to do what he did every day – protect and serve the people of this city."

"He wasn't looking for recognition or accolades – he was simply doing his job."



Mounted police outside Holy Family Church.



Memorial poster in honor of Police Officer Cecil Frank Sledge.

“What began as a routine traffic stop, a task so seemingly ordinary became a moment that defined his extraordinary bravery and dedication. Although 45 years have passed since we lost Cecil, his memory remains alive in this church, in the hearts of his family, in the bond that we share as an NYPD family.”

Sledge was tragically dragged to his death at that traffic stop on Flatlands Avenue and East 78th Street, a death that should have never happened, as his killer was out on parole and is up for parole again this March, according to PBA First Vice President Daniel Tirelli. “He noticed an individual from a prior robbery and he took action immediately. Unfortunately, he lost his life.”

Tirelli stressed the need to keep cop killers in jail. “That person shouldn’t have another day out on the street.”

Sledge’s widow, Linda, reflected back on her husband’s life, a life of dedication to his job and to his family.

“He was always there to help family, friends and strangers. Dedication was the way he worked,” she said.

She reflected on his great smile, personality and sense of humor – and his love of country music. Although he lived a short life of 35 years, he made an impact on those around him.

“He was someone you met and would not forget,” Linda said. “Frank’s beliefs were strong: he believed in one God, one country and one family.”

“I’d like to think Frank is looking down this morning and saying, “Wow, I did make a difference.””

“A violent criminal took the life of a good man, one of New York’s Finest. His killer is eligible for parole in March, and my family will continue to fight for justice,” Linda said. She will be appearing before the parole board on February 14th to express her opposition to parole.

She concluded with this sentiment: “Engraved on Frank’s headstone, it reads, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.’”

Indeed, Police Officer Frank Cecil Sledge was a peacemaker. Rest in peace, Officer Sledge.



Members of the Sledge family with elected officials, members of the NYPD and 69th Precinct Community Council.



NYPD Ceremonial Unit



Bible reading by Cecil Sledge’s grandson, Anthony.

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Notice of Formation of Boop, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 07/17/2020. 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 The LLC: 348 Hancock St, Brooklyn, NY 11216. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of Formation of 2101 Partners II LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/14/2024. 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 2101 Partners II LLC: 99 W Hawthorne Ave, STE 520, Valley Stream, NY 11580. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of Formation of RKF Tax LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/06/2025. 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 M. Lyman: 5416 Avenue M Brooklyn NY. 11234. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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The Regina Opera Performs at Winter Gala Concert



The Regina Opera: Rachel Hippert with José Heredia; Nicole Magallón and Eliam Ramos; Richard Paratley

By Brian Moreno

Although it's cold outside, the Brooklyn-based Regina Opera chased away the winter blues at its Winter Gala Concert, held on Sunday, February 2nd, in the auditorium of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Academy, at 5902 6th Avenue, where the company's artists sang from a selection of famous operatic pieces.

For two hours, attendees were exposed to operatic culture from many famous composers, such as Puccini, Verdi, Donizetti, Bach and Tchaikovsky, and their most iconic operas such as *Carmen*, *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*, to name a few.

After the introduction from producer Francine Garber-Cohen, the Winter Gala Concert formally began as sopranos Nicole Magallón and tenor José Heredia sang in a duet of "Libiamo ne' lieti calici" from Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*. A showcase of powerful vocals and even acting, a performance not in English, still shows human emotion.

Soprano Rachel Hippert conducted another piece from Verdi in her rendition of "Pace, Pace" from *La Forza del Destino*. Hippert's performance was genuinely heartrending, as her operatic singing demonstrated the character's situation of despair and loss.

Though there were also some comedic elements, as seen in Puccini's legendary *La Bohème's* *Quartet Act 3* as Hippert (Mimi) and Heredia (Rodolfo) were trying to determine their relationship's future somberly while Magallón (Musetta) and baritone Eliam Ramos (Marcello) were spazzing out in their own drama.

Although not all the performances had vocals, they were by no means less impactful. Violist Mikhail Parkhomovsky played selections from Tchaikovsky and Paganini, among others.

After an intermission, flutists Richard Paratley and Susan Carlson got the audience back to an operatic mood with their rendition of Puccini's "The Humming Chorus" from *Madama Butterfly*. Special mention goes to pianist Catherine Miller; though in the background, she was always heard with each performance.

Sopranos Kristina Terwilliger had the unique privilege of singing the only English song in the lineup, "Willow Song" from Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, powerful and captivating, easily grabbing the audience's attention and hearts.

Ramos ended the evening with a performance of "The Toreador Song" from *Carmen*, which quite symbolically represents the entire night, triumphant.

Although only one performance was in English, one was still able to grasp the raw emotion being performed by the musical artists, not only by their body language but also by their expressive tone, including the music accompanying it.

"The opportunities that Regina Opera gives me to sing with them is always such a pleasure, said Magallón. "I thought the performance was fantastic today. It was amazing hearing everybody ... I think today was one of the better performances I've ever participated in."



Baritone Eliam Ramos sings the final song, "The Toreador Song," from *Carmen*.

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Sixty-Ninth Precinct's Sector A Begins Year with Three Robberies and Grand Larcenies

By Brenda Cox

The turnout was low for the 69th Precinct Sector A Build the Block meeting held on Thursday, January 30th, at Holy Family Church, 9719 Flatlands Avenue, but the few residents who attended sure had a lot to say.

The meeting was chaired by Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) Courtney Williams, who was assisted by her NCO colleagues, Carlos Delgado, Melanie Lopez and Kyle McGoey. Williams began by giving a breakdown of crime that occurred in the area during the past four weeks. Sector A encompasses Ralph to Louisiana Avenues, from Avenue D to Flatlands Avenue.

She reported three robberies, one of which involved a stolen cell phone; another concerned a sale transaction between two individuals in the BJ's parking lot. The "seller" relieved the buyer of his cash before slashing him. The officers stated that in both cases the perpetrators were known to the victims. In the last incident, the victim was robbed while making a deposit at the ATM of a Capital One bank. The perpetrator snatched the cash, then fled on foot.

Three grand larcenies were also reported. One involved a credit card that was stolen from a vehicle parked on Flatlands Avenue. The thief went on a shopping spree and racked up a sizeable bill. In another incident, bicycles that were left unattended outside a location on Foster Avenue were promptly stolen. In the third incident, the victim paid the perpetrator for a vehicle using Cash App. Unfortunately, he later found out he had purchased a stolen vehicle.

The officers stressed that in order to avoid becoming a victim or to minimize the risk, everyone should be vigilant about their surroundings in addition to being aware of the relentless scams that are wreaked daily on unsuspecting persons.

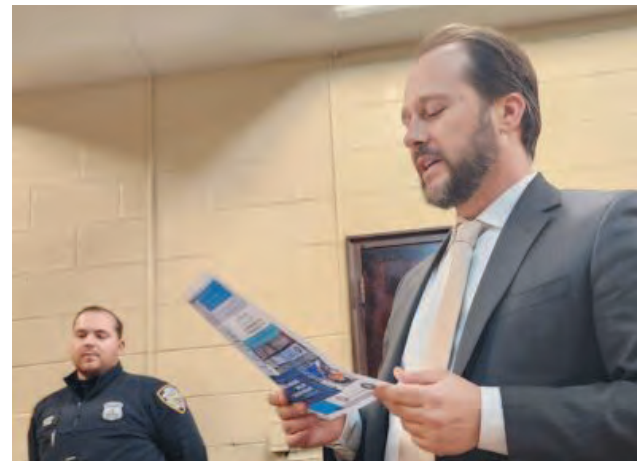
The attendees lodged a few quality-of-life complaints, mainly about illegally parked vehicles, blocked driveways and the burgeoning cannabis industry, which has resulted in many now holding their breath while walking outdoors.

The officers explained that because marijuana use is now legal in NYC, there isn't much they could do about the problem, unless the perpetrators were indulging while in their vehicles. They reminded every-

one that in addition to contacting the precinct, they should also call 311 with such complaints. However, they promised to look into the issues mentioned.

On another note, one resident raised the issue of water pollution in the area, caused by lead pipes. She said her water was tested and the lead levels were very high and provided two QR codes that could be scanned for more information. One gives access to a "lead pipe map," which informs those who input their address if they have lead pipes. The second allows them to request a "lead test kit" to do their own (initial) testing.

Before the meeting adjourned, David Shaeffer, a representative from State Senator Roxanne Persaud's office, gave an update of services provided by her office, as well as events held. He also handed out resource materials and said the senator's office would look into the lead pipe issue.



NCO Kyle McGoey and David Shaeffer, a representative from State Senator Roxanne Persaud's office.



Neighborhood Coordination Officers Carlos Delgado, Courtney Williams, Melanie Lopez and Kyle McGoey hold first Sector A Build the Block meeting of the year.



Attendees at Sector A Build the Block meeting.

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