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## BRONX Times Reporter

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### CB 11 HOSTS 4TH ANNUAL HEALTH FAIR

Everyone was in good spirits celebrating Community Board 11 Health and Social Services Committee's fourth annual Health Fair on Sunday, June 23 at Bronx House. The lifesaving fair featured dozens of screenings, demonstrations and giveaways from vendors such as Montefiore and Jacobi hospitals, NYC Health Department, NYC Human Resources Administration and many other local health facilities and agencies.



Beuris Acost (l) and Shannell Arroyo represented **Union Community Health Center**.

Photo by Silvio Pacifico

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Posted by: Postmaster in News August 1, 2019 0 Comments

## Banishing the Bullying

By Gregg McQueen

It takes a village.

With reported incidents of bullying on the rise in city schools, an anti-bullying resource fair was organized by a host of local organizations to help families address the issue.

The fair, held at Claremont Park on July 25, featured a host of exhibitors offering information on bullying prevention and social services.

Participants took part in group exercise drills and enjoyed raffles, workshops and music from a live DJ.

The event was led by the New York Psychotherapy and Counseling Center (NYPCC) – which formed a Bronx anti-bullying coalition last year with Bronx Legal Services, **Union Community Health Center**, Vibrant Emotional Health, and Destination Tomorrow – and co-sponsored by State Senator Gustavo Rivera.

"We're trying to educate people about this epidemic," said Elliott Klein, Chief Executive Officer of NYPCC. He noted a study indicating that 100,000 children nationwide report staying home from school during the school year due to a bullying incident during the school year.

"We're trying to make the community and the education system aware because the more they're aware, the more it can be prevented," Klein said.



Participants stretched in the park.



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In May, published reports cited state Education Department statistics said there were more than 5,800 incidents of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in New York schools during the 2017-2018 academic year, an increase of more than 300 percent since 2013-2014.

According to the report, the highest number of incidents were cited in two Bronx schools – IS 61 and JHS 118 – with 76 and 56 incidents, respectively.



Abel Cedeño.

A number of high-profile events have rocked the city's public schools in recent years.

In September 2017, 17-year-old student Abel Cedeño was accused of fatally stabbing 15-year-old Matthew McCree, who Cedeño said had bullied him, and also wounded another classmate at the Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation.

Cedeño was found guilty on July 15 on first-degree charges of manslaughter and assault and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

In February 2018, a ninth-grader at Harry S. Truman High School, jumped off the roof of her apartment building after being forced to perform oral sex on two other students in the school's auditorium. The student, 15-year old Mya Vizcarrondo-Ríos had endured a pattern of bullying, body-shaming, and physical assault for several

months, according to the lawsuit filed against the Department of Education (DOE).

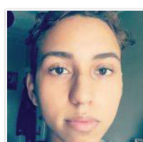
The DOE allocated \$8 million in funding for anti-bullying prevention after the Cedeño incident.

"Bullying causes mental health issues. Children who are being bullied end up with low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and many unfortunately contemplate suicide," Klein said.

He recommended that students being bullied speak with their parents as a first step. "Unfortunately, many students are afraid and don't discuss it with their parents until it becomes a real serious issue," he remarked.



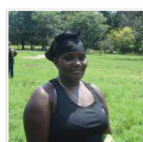
Matthew McCree was killed in September 2017.



Abel Cedeño.



Organizers received certificates of recognition.



"I wanted to come and get as much info as I could," said resident Ericka Lee.



Participants stretched in the park.



Members of Vibrant Emotional Health.

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Klein said that bullying victims can meet with NYPCC therapists. "[We] can also help them advocate with their school to help the bullying stop," he said.

Community-based organizations can also bring in NYPCC representatives to conduct lectures bullying, Klein said.

William Ricigliano, an attorney with law firm Ricigliano & Filopei, said he has handled numerous cases where a Bronx student was a victim of assault related to school bullying.

"When you drop your child off at school – the teachers, the administration take over the role of the parent for supervision of the child," he said. "They must step in by law and make sure there are precautions taken so the child is not injured."

Ricigliano said that schools typically have so much to deal with, that bullying sometimes falls through the cracks.

"They're not taking steps to improved security of students," he said. "When there is an issue, it's often not documented properly. And in many cases, they don't even tell the parents right away."

He said that high-profile cases like that of Cedeño will help put pressure on schools to combat bullying.

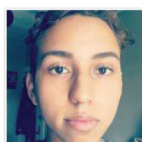
"It's pushed the topic of school bullying to the forefront," he said. "It will help keep schools more on their toes."



"They must step in by law," said attorney Bill Ricigliano (left) of school administrators; he stands here with fellow attorney Frank Filopei.



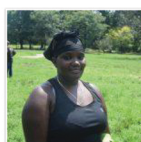
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"There are people who still don't talk with ease about issues to do with mental health. We want to make sure that we tell people that it's not only OK, but necessary," said Rivera, who is a member of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee in the Senate.

He said the work of the anti-bullying coalition is "a good start."



Matthew McCree was killed in September 2017.

"Having these organizations that provide services directly to the community, to give information so parents know what to watch out for and to keep their kids safe," he said.

On July 25, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation extending the scope of the New York State Human Rights Law to cover public schools. The bill also provides the New York State Division of Human Rights the ability to investigate reports of bullying, harassment or other forms of discrimination at public schools.

"Every student has the right to pursue an education free from bullying, harassment and discrimination," he said. "By signing this bill into law, we are building on New York's legacy of equality and fairness and

guaranteeing public school students get the protections they deserve."

Bronx resident Ericka Lee said she attended the fair at Claremont Park because her daughter had previously experienced bullying at school.

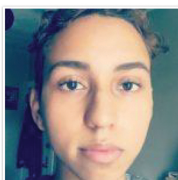
"I wanted to come and get as much info as I could," said Lee, who noted that her daughter's issues had subsided.

"It took her a long time to tell me. We addressed it and things are better now," Lee said. "But it's always good to keep learning as much as you can. We take it home and read through it. All parents should do the same."

***For more, please visit NYPCC.org.***



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Posted by: Postmaster in News August 1, 2019 0 Comments

### Annual health fair held for seniors

By Gregg McQueen

There is such a thing as a free lunch – at least this past Friday.

Over 200 hundred seniors came together for a neighborhood fair, complete with a healthy meal, hosted jointly by State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Víctor Pichardo.

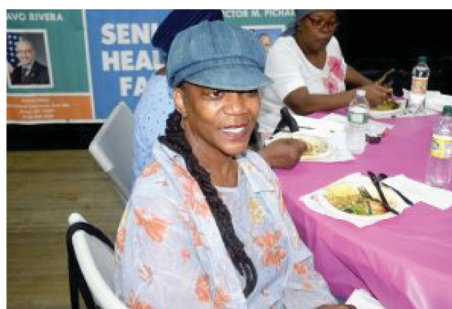
Held at Monroe College, the event is in its sixth year, and showcases resources on health and other services by a variety of exhibitors.

Attendees were also treated to a hot lunch, which was served to them personally by Rivera and Pichardo.

"This is consistently the most popular even we sponsor each year," said Rivera. "A lot of people look forward to it and come every year."

Among the participants were the New York City Department of Health, **Union Community Health Center (UCHC)**, Morris Heights Health Center, NYC Commission on Human Rights, Community Board 7 (CB 7), Healthfirst, Part of the Solution (POTS), and the Statewide Senior Action Council.

POTS representative Joseph Aguilar offered details on the organization's free meal services.



Residents enjoyed a hot lunch.



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"We have many services that local seniors aren't even aware of, like a food pantry," said Aguilar. "People can come in once a month and get free food items."

Representatives of **UCHC** performed free dental screenings and provided details on services, while the Commission on Human Rights provided seniors with information on rent discrimination.

Walker-Santiago said the board always seeks to engage senior citizens.

"We have a mix of young and old residents on the board," said Walker-Santiago. "We always encourage seniors to get involved and join our meetings."

Local resident Carolyn Green said she attends the health fair every year.

"I like to keep up with what's happening in the community," she said. "It's also nice to get information all in one place."

"It's important to get resources to all our neighbors, especially our senior population that needs this information," said Pichardo. "There are services that are available to help them, regardless of language access or other barriers."

Another attendee said she didn't come for the health information so much as she did for face time with her elected officials.

"I come here so I can talk to them personally," she said. "If you have concerns, you can tell them about it."

"People see we're connected with the community members," agreed Pichardo. "After all, we work for them."



Hundreds attended the fair at Monroe College.



On board.



"People can come in once a month and get free food items," said POTS' Joseph Aguilar.



Hundreds attended the fair at Monroe College.



Representatives of **Union Community Health Center (UCHC)** performed free screenings.



"It's important to get resources to all our neighbors," said Assemblymember Víctor Pichardo.



Residents enjoyed a hot lunch.

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## Union Community Health Center's Champion Awards

Union Community Health Center's Health Fair & Community Health Center Champion Award Ceremony was held on Wednesday, August 7 and Thursday, August 8. Photos by Silvio Pacifico

(right) Chef Geneva Wilson graciously accepted her Certificate of Recognition from Dr. York.

(far right) Chef Geneva Wilson graciously accepted her Certificate of Recognition from Dr. York.

(bottom right) Kristin Sainato (l), United Healthcare Quality Management director, and United Healthcare's Elizabeth Tejada (2nd from r) and Elizabeth Terreno presented Dr. York (2nd from l) with a check for \$2,500 check for Union Community Health Center.





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### Union Community Health Center Hosts Open House

Union Community Health Center hosted its Open House and Breakfast on Tuesday, August 6 at 470 E. Fordham Road. (above) UCHC and Empire BlueCross BlueShield representatives were on-site during the event. (below left) UCHC leaders welcomed everyone to the health fair.



A UCHC representative explained the connection between the mind and body.  
Photo by Jewel Webber



(l-r) Sonia Bonilla Avondale, Care Group; Sandra Roblez, Healthfirst and Ehenao Lyaho, Adult Care.  
Photo by Miriam Quin



Local youth received some amazing face paint designs at the health fair.  
Photo by Jewel Webber