



# BOROUGH REPORT

From

# RUBEN DIAZ JR.

**Bronx Borough President**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT

# Borough President Diaz Outlines 'Master Plan' For Bronx Redevelopment

IN THIRD 'STATE OF THE BOROUGH,' BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC GROWTH



In May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., together with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, City Councilman Jimmy Vacca and Congressman Eliot Engel, joined Prestige Properties at the ceremonial groundbreaking of the Mall at Bay Plaza in Co-op City. The 780,000-square-foot enclosed mall is one of the largest projects currently underway in the borough and will create more than 2,000 construction jobs and more than 1,700 permanent jobs. The Mall at Bay Plaza will be the first enclosed fashion mall in the New York City area in almost 40 years. It is slated to open by next spring.

In February, to a full crowd at Harry S. Truman High School in Co-op City, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. delivered his third annual "State of the Borough" Address. During his speech, the borough president highlighted his administration's accomplishments during this past year and announced several initiatives his office will pursue in the upcoming year.

"While these projects are scattered across the borough, they work together to move the Bronx in a positive direction. We are enacting our conceptual 'master plan,'" said Borough President Diaz. "We are balancing the needs of individual neighborhoods with the needs of the entire borough, and our development agenda is moving forward because we are attentive to those concerns."

One of those initiatives is the development of the Kingsbridge Armory into a center for economic growth - one of the projects on the top of the borough president's list since he first took office in 2009. In January, Borough President Diaz and Mayor Bloomberg jointly announced a new RFP for this historic structure, one that allows developers to pursue a wide range of potential uses for the site.

"The future development of the Kingsbridge Armory will serve as the foundation for the revitalization of the Northwest Bronx, in ways that a retail mall never could," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "I am confident that, working together with this administration, we can and will bring a new tenant - and living wage jobs - to this highly valuable and unique Bronx asset."

Borough President Diaz also emphasized his commitment for a greener, healthier Bronx, reiterating his administration's policy not to fund any new projects unless they comply with "green" standards of industry. One of the main "green" projects Borough President Diaz focused on is the introduction of Smith Electric to the borough. This past year, the manufacturer chose the Bronx as its new home, relocating from Missouri.

Smith Electric has already found a purchaser in FreshDirect, one of the most recent major corporations to settle in the Bronx. Borough President Diaz noted that his office has signed a strong written agreement with FreshDirect, one that will secure jobs for Bronx residents, a greener environment, and other concessions.

"Not only will FreshDirect bring 3,000 total jobs to the Bronx, they will expand their business to neighborhoods across the borough. Over the next five years, FreshDirect plans to convert their entire delivery fleet to a cleaner, greener one," said Borough President Diaz. "This is an unqualified victory for the Bronx."

The borough president highlighted several other successful economic ventures the Bronx has experienced in the past year, including a plan that will complete the revitalization of the West Farms neighborhood as well as the genesis of a long-term deal that will maintain Hunts Point's status as the premiere produce market in the world, right here in the Bronx. Borough President Diaz also mentioned his continued support of the borough's small business community, noting that the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation offered assistance to more than 1,000 small businesses in the borough last year.

Improving education in the Bronx is also one of Borough President Diaz's top priorities. The Borough President spoke about the Bronx's first Education Summit, "From Cradle to Career," which was held last fall. The paper

was issued in March, covering a wide variety of education topics that face the Bronx and the entire City.

In addition, Borough President Diaz made it clear that increasing the health of Bronx residents is also at the top of his agenda, and announced that a "Bronx Health Summit" will be taking place next year.

"Like our economic development and education summits before it, this event will bring together the best minds on health and wellness from across the nation to devise a comprehensive plan to put the Bronx on the right track," Borough President Diaz said. The borough president closed his speech emphasizing the importance of harmony among all Bronx elected officials, businesses, community groups, non-profit organizations, and neighbors to make the borough a better place to live.

"We have a great Bronx team right here, our own version of the New York Yankees or the Super Bowl champion New York Giants. Together, as a team, we will move the Bronx forward into a new age of success. And together, as a team, we will win."



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Ruben Diaz Jr.  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

June 2012

Dear Bronxite:

We are doing great work in the Bronx. In partnership with our elected officials, community boards, neighborhood organizations, educational and business communities and all Bronxites together, my office has put forth a strong new agenda for the future of our borough—a vision that continues to bear fruit each and every day.

New businesses are making their home in the Bronx, and our existing businesses are growing like never before. We have seen a boom not just in economic development but in housing, education, in the green economy and across all aspects of life in our borough.

I want to share that vision with you. In this publication we have showcased the many victories that our borough has seen in recent years, while also outlining a path forward to success in the future.

I cannot do it alone. I need all of you, as “One Bronx,” to join us in our efforts to make this borough an even better place to live, to work and to raise a family.

I couldn't be more proud to call this thriving borough my home, and to have served as your borough president since 2009. I would love to hear your thoughts on the future of the Bronx, and encourage you to contact me at [webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov](mailto:webmail@bronxbp.nyc.gov).

Sincerely,

**Ruben Diaz Jr.**  
Bronx Borough President



## Borough President Diaz Tours the Former Site of the Stella D'oro Cookie Factory

On Friday, March 23, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined Congressman Eliot Engel, City Council Member G. Oliver Koppell and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz on a tour of the former site of the Stella D'oro cookie factory in Kingsbridge. The tour, led by developer Joseph Farkas of Metropolitan Realty Associates, outlined the impending "Riverdale Crossing" retail development that is slated to occupy the site.

# AFTER HISTORIC CAMPAIGN AND MOVEMENT, LANDMARK LIVING WAGE LEGISLATION PASSES NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

**DIVERSE SUPPORTERS PRAISE LEGISLATION AS MUCH-NEEDED REFORM THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PUT AN END TO THE CITY'S COSTLY FAILURE TO CREATE GOOD JOBS**

In April, the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act, legislation that grew out of an historic citywide campaign for living wage jobs and economic justice and was championed by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., passed the New York City Council by a wide margin of 44-5, drawing praise from elected officials, labor leaders, faith leaders, and business owners.

The campaign spawned a highly visible and vocal movement that engaged thousands of New Yorkers and led to overwhelming support for the legislation across the political spectrum—74% of voters overall, according to a recent Quinnipiac University poll, with 60 percent of Republicans saying it is government's responsibility to ensure workers are paid a decent wage.

Under the terms of the legislation, any private development project directly accepting \$1 million or more in taxpayer subsidies must pay employees a living wage of \$10/hour with supplemental health benefits or \$11.50/hour without benefits. The Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act, co-sponsored by Council Members Oliver Koppell and Annabel Palma and introduced at the behest of Borough President Diaz, reforms the city's taxpayer-funded economic development programs, which have failed to create good jobs for New Yorkers over the past decade because, until now, they lacked enforceable wage standards of any kind.

"For too long, major development projects have taken heavily from the taxpayer's wallets while providing only poverty-wage jobs. The 'Fair Wages for New Yorkers' Act will guarantee that, when major developers take city dollars they will do right by their employees and taxpayers. "This legislation will fundamentally improve the way business is conducted here," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

After billions of public dollars spent on poverty-wage jobs, this legislation will put an end to that costly failure and fundamentally transform the city's approach to job creation and economic development. At a time of rising poverty and strained public resources, the living wage legislation is an act of fiscal responsibility and fundamental fairness: it establishes strong wage standards for jobs created via subsidized economic development projects, giving low-wage New Yorkers and taxpayers alike a boost. It will cover projects overseen by the largest urban economic development agency in the United States, New York City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and will have a far-reaching impact on thousands of future jobs in the city.

"We are proud to have played a lead role in building the living wage movement and shaping this legislation. The city needs to create higher-wage jobs, not poverty-wage jobs. Passage of this legislation is a major

triumph for working people, for democracy, and for our city. It is a significant step toward reducing inequality and poverty in our city," said Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU, UFCW).

"I am pleased with the passage of the living wage bill. This legislation will benefit the city by reducing dependency on government programs increasing consumer spending and adding to our tax revenue," said City Council Member G. Oliver Koppell.

"It's been a long journey to get here, but with the help of all of our partners, I believe we have succeeded in producing landmark legislation that will immediately help to improve the lives of hundreds of working New Yorkers," said Council Member Annabel Palma.

Though Mayor Bloomberg has vetoed the legislation, advocates are confident that the City Council will override the mayor and see the bill passed.

"This is an incredibly popular piece of legislation, one that has the potential to give City residents a chance to provide a better way of life for their families. I look forward to both the City Council's override of this veto and to the day the 'Fair Wages for New Yorkers' Act becomes law," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

## Borough President Diaz Lauds City Council's Approval of the Westchester Square BID

"I am extremely happy that the City Council has approved the establishment of the Westchester Square Business Improvement District. As I mentioned in my recent "State of the Borough," my administration has thrown its support behind this BID and its commitment to make this area a premier shopping district. Westchester Square is one of the most important commercial strips in the Bronx, and each day it brings thousands of residents, students, and visitors to its confines to shop, eat, and converse with their neighbors.

"I want to thank the members of the BID Steering Committee, property owners, and merchants for their commitment to the Bronx in establishing this BID and look forward to working with them to insure the future vibrancy and economic vitality of this commercial district," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.



*During Bronx Week 2012 in May, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. honored the borough's most fabulous seniors at the Second Annual Senior Sweet Shoppe, held at the Dreiser Loop Community Center in Co-op City. Borough President Diaz joined in the fun with seniors as danced along to the "peppermint twist," the "mashed potato" and the "swim" at the old-fashioned sock hop.*



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# Borough President Diaz Announces the Introduction of the Health Impact Statement Initiative Into The City Council

**B**ronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has announced the introduction of the Health Impact Statement resolution into the City Council. Introduced by City Council Member Helen Diane Foster at the behest of Borough President Diaz, the Health Impact Assessment Resolution calls for a new citywide policy guaranteeing that significant health related analysis will occur prior to planning, zoning, and development.

The policy would ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the health and well-being of neighborhoods across the City. The Health Impact Statement assessment would evaluate health impacts and outcomes not currently addressed by Environmental Impact Assessments.

"My administration, together with our City Council delegation, has taken steps toward making our building stock more environmentally-friendly and now more health conscious. I believe that together, we can determine how the utilization of these policies will lead to improved health outcomes not just here in the Bronx, but across the City," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. Borough President Diaz first

mentioned the importance of health impact assessments during his State of the Borough address last year and on January 10, 2012, Borough President Diaz hosted the Bronx's first Health Impact Assessment planning meeting at Hostos Community College.

In the meeting representatives from government, education, health, and not-for-profit agencies, highlighted how the well-being of communities is determined by a wide range of economic, social, and environmental influences, and discussed how the utilization of the Health Impact Assessment will lead to improving health among Bronx residents.

The Health Impact Assessment Resolution also calls for increased collaboration between the Department of City Planning, the Economic Development Corporation, and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to ensure that health is regularly taken into account in development-related decision-making.

For more information about the Health Impact Statement Assessment, visit [www.bronxboropres.nyc.gov](http://www.bronxboropres.nyc.gov).

## FreshDirect Expands Service To The Bronx



**ONLINE GROCER NOW ACCEPTS ORDERS FROM ALL BRONX ZIP CODES; FRESHDIRECT WINS USDA APPROVAL TO LAUNCH FOOD STAMP PILOT PROGRAM; INITIATIVE COULD LEAD TO FOOD STAMP POLICY CHANGE**

**F**reshDirect has announced that it is now accepting delivery orders from every zip code in the Bronx, expanding access to fresh, healthy groceries.

Earlier this year, FreshDirect partnered with Governor Cuomo, Mayor Bloomberg, and Borough President Diaz to announce that the leading fresh food Internet grocer will invest \$112.6 million to build its new headquarters at Harlem River Yard.

The move will create 1,000 new jobs to support our continued growth over time and will retain 2,000 existing jobs. In addition, the actual construction of the new headquarters will create approximately 684 construction jobs.

FreshDirect has also secured approval for a novel pilot program that it hopes will result in changing a federal policy that currently keeps food stamp recipients from using their benefits to purchase groceries over the Internet. This pilot program will enable food stamp recipients at a few Bronx locations to purchase groceries from FreshDirect and will enable the company to identify regulatory modifications that may need to be made to the Electronic Benefits Transfer, the system that supports food stamp transactions.

FreshDirect agreed to expand its service to the Bronx, and to accept EBT, as part of an agreement the company signed with Borough President Diaz and the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation. The company has also made commitments on local hiring and acquiring a greener, cleaner delivery fleet.

"Throughout the relocation process, FreshDirect has been focused on the needs of Bronx residents, so much so that the company signed a comprehensive MOU with my office outlining their commitment to the Bronx on service expansion, accepting food stamps, local hiring and other key concerns," said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "This announcement shows

that FreshDirect is ready to live up to those commitments ahead of schedule, years before making the Bronx their official home. I am pleased with FreshDirect's plans to expand its delivery zones to every corner of the borough. Ultimately, this move will offer residents increased healthy grocery options."



Last July, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and State Senator Jeff Klein co-sponsored the Bronx's annual Independence Day celebration at Orchard Beach. Here, Borough President Diaz and State Senator Klein join Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Assemblyman Carl Heastie and State Senator Diane Savino in showing their patriotism at the event, which is attended by thousands of Bronxites and features music and fireworks.

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## BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ CALLS ON DOE TO REFORM SPECIALIZED HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

REPORTS SHOWS THAT THE DOE HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITIES TO BRONX STUDENTS; CALLS FOR INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRONX AND CITY STUDENTS ON SHS, GIFTED & TALENTED CLASSES

**B**ronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has released a new report, titled "An Action Plan for Fixing the Specialized High School Admissions Process," highlighting Bronx students' severe underrepresentation in Specialized High Schools as a consequence of inadequate test-preparation and other factors. The City's Department of Education (DOE), the report found, has failed to provide adequate opportunities for Bronx middle-school students to prepare for the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT), the sole metric in determining acceptance into eight of the City's nine Specialized High Schools.

The DOE created the Specialized High School Institute (SHSI), to address this issue. Unfortunately, inadequate funding and implementation has caused it to fail to produce any meaningful results. It is a 22-month extracurricular program designed to assist eligible City public and private school students in preparing for the SHSAT, and is currently offered at only four Bronx sites out of 18 citywide locations.

"The SHSI is a great program, and one that we want to see expanded in the Bronx. It is unfortunate that the Department of Education has failed to articulate a plan that considers the unique challenges faced by children living in the Bronx. At a time when fewer Bronx students are receiving offers to our two most prestigious public high schools - the Bronx High School of Science and the High School of American Studies at Lehman College - the DOE should be doing everything it can to bring more Bronx students into this program, not placing artificial limits on enrollment," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

The report concludes that the SHSI's eligibility requirements place Bronx students at a severe disadvantage. Among them is a 90 percent attendance requirement that prevents Bronx students, who would otherwise have the potential to enroll in and succeed at a specialized high school, from gaining entrance into the prep program.

"The Department of Education has to create firm pathways for our neediest children to be

successful. Without firm and defined standards and strategies that guarantee fair access, the policies of the DOE are meaningless," said Dr. Betty A. Rosa, member, New York State Board of Regents.

Dr. Diane Ravitch, Research Professor of Education at New York University, emphasized that the DOE "should create multiple measures to identify children in the Bronx who would benefit by enrolling in a gifted program. Indeed, the Department should make greater efforts to recognize the gifts of every child in the Bronx."

The report offers several recommendations for the DOE to improve both the SHSI's stringent eligibility criteria and the lack of proportional representation of Bronx students in Specialized High Schools. Among them are that the DOE guarantee the top 5% of each borough eighth grade class a seat in a specialized high school,

that the top 15% of each Bronx middle school's 5th and 6th grades be given automatic offers into a SHSI program, that the number of specialized high school seats be increased across the City, either by expanding the existing schools or creating more Specialized High Schools; that the number of first graders accepted into gifted and talented programs be doubled, and that any student that qualifies for a gifted and talented program be guaranteed a seat.

"To grow the leaders of tomorrow, we must start today. We have some of the brightest middle school students in the City, if not the nation, right here in the Bronx. It is time for the Department of Education to provide the Bronx with the proper resources to make sure that their minds can thrive," said Borough President Diaz.

A full copy of the report can be found at the following link: <http://bit.ly/L3yYwJ>



Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. celebrated St. Patrick's Day with the students from the Flynn School for Irish Dance at his annual Bronx Irish Heritage Celebration in March. The event took place at the Rambling House in Woodlawn, and drew a crowd of more than 150 from all corners of the Bronx.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2012



In February, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined The Bronx Museum of the Arts to celebrate Black History Month 2012. Here, Borough President Diaz and Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene stand with honorees from the event, including Leroy Richard-Archible, Rev. Fredrick Crawford of the Union Grove Baptist Church, the Hon. Elizabeth Audrey Taylor, Justice, Bronx County Supreme Court and Bernel Arthur Richardson, chairman of United Leadership of the Bronx.

## Borough President Diaz Works to Bring Metro North to the East Bronx

Since taking office in 2009, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. has been working with businesses, elected officials, community organizations and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to bring Metro North Rail Road service to the east Bronx communities of Co-op City, Parkchester, Morris Park and Hunts Point.

The plan would use existing rail infrastructure and, if and when it was completed, would offer rail services to tens of thousands of Bronxites and transform commuting options across the region.

In November, Borough President Diaz held a meeting with dozens of stakeholders to gauge their interest in the plan, and those in attendance were unanimously in favor of the plan. The MTA is currently studying the feasibility of the proposal.

"While some may be concerned with costs, in the long run this proposal would save money, as it would eliminate our borough's overreliance on buses," said Borough President Diaz. "I will continue to work with officials on all levels of government in order to make certain that this major project finally becomes a reality in the East Bronx."



## Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and State Sen. Gustavo Rivera Launch the Second Year of the Bronx CAN Health Initiative

**B**ronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Montefiore Medical Center, and other community health partners launched the second year of the Bronx CAN Health Initiative on Saturday, June 2nd at St. James Park. Dozens of Bronxites participated in Saturday's health fair, taking advantage of blood pressure and diabetes screenings, a free Zumba class and the advice of health care professionals.

"As an elected official that represents part of the Bronx, I was extremely concerned to learn that our borough the unhealthiest in the state and that there are higher rates of childhood obesity, diabetes and other preventable diseases in the 33rd Senate District," said Senator Gustavo Rivera. "That is why last year when we launched the Bronx CAN Health Initiative, I pledged to make myself an example, losing over 27 lbs. since last June. This year I have pledged to continue to lose between 10-15 lbs. adhering to long-term goals that will ultimately have an enormous impact on my overall health. I encourage all Bronxites who haven't already joined me, to join me in taking the Bronx CAN Health Challenge this year so that together we can make the Bronx healthier."

"I am delighted that the Bronx CAN Health Initiative is beginning its second year of education, inspiration and motivation for healthier lifestyles. This year we will again launch the CAN Health Challenge, led by Senator Rivera, encouraging Bronxites to set some strategic wellness goals for the summer months. We are also putting the finishing touches on a CAN Retail Challenge that is aimed at educating our Bronx retailers on the minor but significant adjustments they can make to provide healthier food options to their consumers," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"I am thrilled to join Senator Rivera and Borough President Diaz Jr. in the launch of the Bronx CAN Health Initiative" said Steven M. Safyer, MD, President & CEO of Montefiore Medical Center. "Our community leaders set tremendous examples for us, as does the partnership behind this important initiative. Montefiore is committed to furthering these efforts to promote physical exercise and healthier eating-choices crucial to reducing the rates of obesity and diabetes and to advancing the health of our borough.

"The Committee of Interns and Residents is pleased to be partnering with the Bronx CAN Initiative for the second year in a row," said Dr. Yusef Williams, Family Medicine Resident at Bronx Lebanon Hospital. "As physicians practicing in the Bronx, we understand the importance of community projects like the Bronx CAN Initiative to empower Bronxites to make healthier choices. We applaud Senator Rivera's and the Borough President's commitment to making the Bronx a healthier borough and we look forward to supporting the initiative."

The Bronx CAN Health Initiative was launched in response to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's study that showed the Bronx as the unhealthiest county in the state of New York. This initiative will tackle issues of obesity, nutrition, exercise and access to preventative health in the Bronx. The month of June will be focused on physical fitness and exercise.

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In June, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and State Senator Gustavo Rivera, together with Montefiore Medical Center and other community health partners launched the second year of the Bronx CAN Health Initiative at St. James Park on Jerome Avenue.

## Borough President Diaz Helps Pave The Way For Bronx Revitalization

**O**ver the course of his three years as Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz Jr. has been at the forefront of major rezoning efforts to increase business and residential development opportunities in the Bronx. This year, his administration helped lead the Bronx's biggest rezoning initiative since the development of Co-op City in the late 1960's: the revitalization of the West Farms neighborhood. "When United States President Jimmy Carter visited West Farms in 1977, he witnessed firsthand a blighted, rundown Charlotte Street. Today,

that area is filled with dozens of private homes and now with this rezoning effort we're looking at a bright future as we rewrite our history through new development," said Borough President Diaz.

Signature Urban Properties bought several blocks on West Farms Road and proposed the massive neighborhood renovation. The project will feature 10 high-rise buildings that will include 1,300 new housing units, 30,000 square feet of retail space and a new school, creating more than 400 jobs in the process. This development will also include new public space, have a heavy "green" component, and will serve as the blueprint for developers across the nation county. In an effort to attract new affordable housing and new business ventures along Webster Avenue, Borough President Diaz also threw his support for rezoning approximately 80 blocks in the Bedford Park and Norwood communities.

"I would like to see Webster Avenue transform into a vibrant, inviting and safe residential and com-

mercial business area. I strongly believe that this rezoning effort will accomplish that and at the same time it will also benefit our entire Borough," Diaz said. Borough President Diaz has also helped bring about the much anticipated rezoning of the Williamsbridge and Baychester communities, which will help bring about new growth along the area's commercial corridors, including White Plains Road and Gun Hill Road.

"The rezoning of the northeast Bronx will usher in critical new development, and help bring new commercial opportunities to these important neighborhoods," said Borough President Diaz. Other major projects to provide opportunities for new residential and commercial development include, rezoning eight blocks along the 161st Street and River Avenue corridors and a plan to rezone all or portions of seventy-five blocks along Third and Tremont Avenues. "We've made great strides in major rezoning efforts that will lead to increased development in areas that are primed for new growth," Diaz said.

## BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ, MERCY COLLEGE AND TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL COLLABORATE TO LAUNCH INNOVATIVE PROGRAM: THE BRONX ACHIEVEMENT PACT

**Initiative Aims to Improve Educational Outcomes in the Bronx by Raising High School Graduation Rates, Enhancing College Readiness and Maximizing College Enrollment**

In April, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Mercy College - in conjunction with Bronx-based Harry S. Truman High School in Co-op City - announced the launch of The Bronx Achievement Pact, an innovative new educational initiative that aims to raise high school graduation rates, enhance college readiness and maximize college enrollment.

"This innovative program has the potential to change the way we prepare our students for college not just here in the Bronx, but across the entire City," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. "At my education summit last fall, I called on our education service providers to develop new, innovative ways to improve college-readiness in our borough, and I am thrilled that both Mercy College and Truman High School have answered that call with the Bronx Achievement Pact."

By leveraging the resources of colleges and universities and collaborating with existing public high schools, the Bronx Achievement Pact is a comprehensive and scalable solution to the education crisis. Educational indicators in the Bronx are the lowest in New York City, with just 59% of Bronx students graduating from high school and only 17% considered "college ready" by the New York State Education Department. The Bronx Achievement Pact will expand opportunities for Bronx students by bridging the gap between high school and college to raise high school graduation rates, improve college readiness and increase college enrollment.

"A quality education is the critical factor in achieving economic success, personal

satisfaction and social stability," said Mercy College President Dr. Kimberly Cline. "The Bronx Achievement Pact will improve educational outcomes for Bronx students and secure a better and more prosperous future for generations of Bronx residents. We are excited to undertake this revolutionary initiative with our committed partners, and we look forward to further collaboration with additional partners as we move ahead."

The Bronx Achievement Pact uses a comprehensive strategy that integrates successful high school and college experiences:

**Early College Program:** Offering students 30 hours of transferable college credits during the regular high school day, with the option of completing an additional 30 credits to earn an Associate's degree during summers, weekends and school breaks, all at no cost to students or their parents.

**College and Career Exploration:** Building awareness about all aspects of the college process and various career pathways.

**Learning Excellence:** Facilitating focused tutoring and mentoring relationships between high school and college students.

**Summer Support:** Engaging struggling students by sharpening skills in literacy, math and critical thinking and exposing them to college.

**Parent and Community Engagement:** Providing parents with the knowledge and skills to support their children on the path to and through college.

"Student success in school - both in achievement and aspiration - is largely a function of the dedication of the adults guiding the students: the teachers and the parents," said Mercy College School of Education Dean Alfred S. Posamentier.

"The Mercy College School of Education is dedicated to producing first rate teachers and administrators for the Bronx Achievement Pact, as well as establishing a Parent Center



at our Bronx campus that will serve the entire borough and should be a paradigm for the rest of the City."

Mercy College will partner with Harry S. Truman High School in the Bronx to pilot the Bronx Achievement Pact in September 2012. It will expand to include one additional high school in September 2013, and then will continue to expand into 2-5 schools each year until all Bronx high schools with a graduation rate below 70% can join the Bronx Achievement Pact.

"The Bronx Achievement Pact is the bridge that students need to make a successful transition from high school to college," said Harry S Truman High School Principal, Sana Q. Nasser. "Bronx students will be fortunate enough to have the support that they need to gain acceptance into college, but also to flourish as life-long scholars. Truman High School is honored to be partnered with the Bronx Borough President and Mercy College on such a tremendous opportunity that will benefit many students."

To support its growth over the next several decades, the Bronx Achievement Pact aims to raise \$100 million in operating and endowment funds. This funding will allow the initiative to sustain and expand programming, ensuring that all students in our target schools can take advantage of the Bronx Achievement Pact.

## BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ RALLIES FOR LADDER 53

### CITY ISLAND FIREHOUSE ONCE AGAIN FACES POTENTIAL CLOSURE

In June, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. joined City Council Member Jimmy Vacca and more than 100 residents of City Island to protest the proposed closure of Ladder 53, the only firehouse located on City Island.

This is the fourth straight year that a mayoral budget has proposed eliminating Ladder 53 on City Island. If Ladder 53 were to close, it would take the next-nearest ladder company over ten minutes to respond to an emergency, if neither of the two drawbridges leading onto the island were raised.

That would give City Island the longest first-alarm response time citywide, creating a serious risk for a community lined with wood-frame homes, marinas, boatyards, and restaurants.

"Once again, City Island is forced to stand up and demand that this community is treated fairly, and that it gets the fire services it deserves. We successfully defended Ladder 53 for the past three budget cycles, and working together, I know we will do so once again," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.



In June, Borough President Diaz joined Councilman Vacca at a rally to oppose the closure of Ladder 53 on City Island.