

BRONX BORO NEWS

EDITORIAL

Parks growing at last

The Bronx is rich in parkland. With more than 6,800 acres of parks, 24% of the Bronx is given over to public recreational use. That's a higher percentage than any other borough: Way more than Brooklyn, which is only 8% parks, and even more than verdant Staten Island, which clocks in at 16%.

Bronx parkland, however, is concentrated in the northern part of the borough. That is good for the folks who live there, but not so great for those who don't.

South of the Cross Bronx Expressway, public greenery is sparse. Parks get fewer and smaller, and the distances between them get bigger as the street numbers get lower and the population gets denser.

So, last week's announcement that businessman Barry Segal was putting up \$100,000 worth of help to create a chain of small parks in the South Bronx was most welcome.

The contribution was announced at former President Bill Clinton's Global Initiative conference, and Clinton himself took time out from raising billions of dollars to address the world's biggest problems to underline the importance of such contributions as Segal's. The gift will go to the Hunts Point-based Sustainable South Bronx, which is headed by Majora Carter.

Parks are among the things that make urban living bearable. The more parks, the better, and when the parks are where they are needed, better still.

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BE OUR GUEST: D. MILTON STOKES, nutritionist

Council has power to ensure kids get much-needed milk

Ask registered dietitians or nutrition experts today what nutrient kids are lacking, and many answer "calcium."

While schools throughout the country are doing all they can to encourage kids to drink more milk, including offering more low-fat milk flavors, asking milk processors to update milk packaging to make it more appealing to students and introducing calcium-rich vending machines in schools, here in the Bronx, the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has limited students' milk choices.

Last year, schools throughout the Bronx and the rest of the city removed whole and 2% milk as well as low-fat flavored milk from school menus, leaving students with only a choice of 1% and nonfat milk available all the time, and flavored nonfat milk one day a week. Presumably, this move came about to help combat the childhood-obesity epidemic.

Studies show us that limited milk choices mean children drink less milk, forgoing nine essential nutrients, including calcium, Vitamins A and D, and zinc.

It matters most what children do now nu-

tritionally to strengthen and prepare themselves for adulthood. Because no other beverage can hold a candle to the nutrient powerhouse that milk is, the last thing we want to see is reduced consumption.

"Calcium deficiency is a crisis in this country," warns Keith-Thomas Ayoob, associate professor, Department of Pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx.

Moreover, U.S. Department of Agriculture data demonstrate about two out three boys and girls, ages 6 to 11, fall short of their recommended calcium intakes, while roughly four out of five teenagers don't get enough.

When students drink milk with school lunch, they achieve higher intakes of several important nutrients. When offered flavored milk, kids are more likely to meet their calcium requirements.

Since federal dietary guidelines, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dietetic Association specifically mention flavored milk as a choice for kids, Ayoob gives flavored milk the green light.

Beyond the flavor issue, more than 80% of the milk purchased by Latinos is either

whole or reduced-fat (2%). Latino students may not make the transition from whole milk to nonfat, resulting in their choosing no milk at all.

Worse yet, New York City school data show consumption of milk dropped 5% when whole milk was taken off the menu and dropped 15% when low-fat chocolate milk was not offered.

I fear the well-intentioned folks who restricted milk varieties did not consider these consequences. But thankfully, City Councilman Bill de Blasio (D-Brooklyn) introduced Resolution 636 calling for a review of the decision to limit milk choices.

We need to step back and temper intention with science, obtain student and parent input and direct efforts to fortify kids with as much of the right nutrition as possible.

Urge your Councilmember to support Resolution 636 so we can turn this potential nutrient deficiency predicament into one of nutrient adequacy.

D. Milton Stokes is the chief dietitian at St. Barnabas Hospital & Nursing Home in the Bronx and national media spokesman for the American Dietetic Association. Contact him at milton_stokes@stbarnabas-ny.org.

Lack of calcium is a crisis for American children

VOICE of the PEOPLE

Put public schools in spotlight

Forty-eight million children attend public schools in the United States. That's nine out of 10 U.S. kids. While many students attend great public schools that produce remarkable results, too many schools set low expectations and struggle to provide the basic resources students need to succeed. Today's children are tomorrow's leaders, workers, taxpayers, voters and fellow citizens. We must improve all public schools to better prepare our children — and America — to meet the challenges ahead. Every child deserves a quality public school, and I'm asking you to help make sure they all have one.

Readers like me rely on your newspaper for information about how public schools are doing and ways that elected officials and the community can make sure all kids have good schools. I'm asking you to make the following topics a priority when you cover public schools:

- Public school success stories;
- Promising school reform strategies;
- Promising strategies to engage parents and the community;
- Student achievement and school performance;

Submit your letters by e-mail, with "VOICE" in the subject field, to:

BrooklynNews@nydailynews.com, fax them to (646) 304-8759, or mail them to **Voice of the People, Brooklyn News, P.O. Box 3314, New York, NY 10116**.

All communications must include a signature, street address and daytime phone number.

The Brooklyn News reserves the right to edit submissions.

■ What elected officials are doing to fulfill campaign promises for public education.

Thank you for the work you do to support quality public education and make sure all kids have good schools.

Sonia Rodriguez

Kaat's voice will be missed

What a pleasure it was to watch a Yankee game when Jim Kaat was at the microphone. He had the ability to take the listener (or viewer) into the game and the strategies of pitching by analyzing the game situation. As he put it: what was the score, the inning and the situation.

He demonstrated how to hold the ball for each pitch. He pooh-poohed the mph of the ball if the pitcher had no location or movement.

His recollection of the games he participated in and the people he met in the game all made for a lively broadcast. He had baseball savvy, and he knew how to pass it on to the viewer.

I for one will miss him.

Herbert Ginsberg

Pataki fails to pick up on Sanit concerns

Gov. Pataki does not have a clue what hard work really is. We Sanitation workers risk our lives every day just like the Police and Fire Department.

Gov. Pataki would not last one week behind the truck. Sanitation is one of the hardest and most dangerous jobs in the city. Next time Pataki has something stupid to say, he should keep it to himself.

We are out there in all kinds of weather. Does Pataki know how hard it is to pick up garbage after a snowstorm? No, he doesn't. So don't tell us we don't need accidental death benefits.

John Salomone



Montefiore names room for its prez

Pictured at the ribbon-cutting for Montefiore Medical Center's Spencer Foreman, M.D., Pavilion are (from l.): Jordan Cohen, president emeritus, Association of American Medical Colleges; Spencer Foreman, president of Montefiore; Ken Raske, president of Greater New York Hospital Association; Jay Langner, chairman of Montefiore's Board of Trustees; and Dick Davidson, president of American Hospital Association.

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