

NEWS LETTER

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9



CB9 TOURS BRC

For over 50 years, BRC has created programs and facilities designed to serve the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including services like transit outreach, temporary housing, workforce development, long-term housing, and more.

On March 10th, 2023, Co-chairs Signe Mortensen and Elizabeth Waytkus of the Housing, Land Use & Zoning Committee of Manhattan Community Board 9 met with CEO & President of BRC, Muzzy Rosenblatt to tour a property currently located in University Heights, Bronx. The property consisted of units for supportive as well as affordable housing. In addition, the property contained outdoor spaces and common areas.



PHOTO: Attendees observing the common area



First Annual Senior Resource Fair

On May 2nd, Manhattan Community Board 9’s Senior Issues Committee hosted its first annual Senior Resource Fair at the District Office. Co-chairs, Walter T. Alexander and Carlton Davis wanted to gather local agencies and organizations to inform and educate seniors in the community of the resources and materials that were available to them as Seniors have not been able to properly gather since the pandemic in 2020.

The event was a huge success with over 20 agencies and organizations participating and the attendance of over 50 seniors. The event consisted of over 7 presentations from agencies and organizations such as The Department of Aging, MTA, PALANTE, The District Attorneys Office, the local precincts, and FDNY. The representatives were able to answer questions and concerns that the Seniors had and give them their contact info in the case that they may need their assistance in the near future.

Lastly, The Senior Issues Committee collaborated with the Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine’s office and Assemblyman Al Taylor’s office to provide those who have made significant contributions to the community by awarding them with certificates of recognition.

Co-chair of the Senior Issues committee, Walter T Alexander left us with a few words: “The first Senior Resource Fair held by the Senior Issues Committee of Community Board 9 was a rousing success, thanks to the Committee, the District Manager, and the office staff. Thank you to the various local establishments that donated food, and the providers who provided our seniors with dental and medical screenings. The seniors seemed to enjoy themselves. Kudos to all that came! Looking forward to next year!”



PHOTO: Award recipients and the Seniors issues committee

Happy Munkey Event at the Forum

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 9

The Cannabis Task Force teamed up with internationally-known NYC lifestyle company Happy Munkey. Happy Munkey is a lifestyle company that strives in networking and educating peers within the industry.

The "Choose Happy Symposium," produced by Happy Munkey, was a community-focused event aimed at exploring the opportunities in New York State's emerging cannabis industry and the benefits of cannabis as it relates to health and wellness. The symposium brought together leading experts, medical professionals, and industry pioneers to show educational panels on various topics ranging from "Health & Wellness" to "Economic Opportunity in Cannabis".



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A New Girl Scout Troop in West Harlem

If you happen to past the corner of 125th St and Amsterdam Ave a few Saturdays ago, you might have seen young ladies selling cookies. These were the young ladies of Girl Scout Troop 3406 and Yes they were selling Girl Scout cookies.

Girl Scout Troop 3406 is located in the NYCHA Grant Houses and was formed this past November. The Troop was organized by the new Grant Houses Resident Association team led by President Viilorii Thornton. Ms. Thornton and her team saw a need to provide young girls with an opportunity to learn new skills, be involved in their community, and develop a sisterhood while giving back to their community. The troop currently consists of 31 girls ranging from grades K thru 8th. The majority of the girls reside in the Grant Houses but the troop has also attracted girls from the surrounding neighborhood. We wish Troop 3406 all the best and look forward to hearing about their future adventures.

BOLINGER’S DEPARTURE

MESSHAGE TO MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 9

Dear members of Manhattan
Community Board 9,

As I prepare to step down from my role as President of Columbia University, I have taken this opportunity to spend a great deal of time reflecting on what the last two decades have meant to me. They have been about creating new knowledge, educating future generations, and addressing global challenges, of course. But they have also been about living and working in New York City, about being part of a community with so much to offer, a community steeped in a history that is as rich and impressive as it is complex and expansive.

When I took on this role in 2002, I knew how important it was that Columbia embrace its neighbors, engage, build trust, and create the kinds of programs and partnerships that form the deep connective tissue between campus and community. My vision for the Manhattanville campus, in fact, was one in which these kinds of connections were quite literally built into the fabric of the site. We thought about how the buildings would interact with the world around them, how the design could bring the community into our campus, and into the life of the University in a way that had never been done before.

More than a decade later, the Manhattanville campus is an active intellectual hub, humming with life and welcoming the community around it. It has transformed West Harlem and these programs we created years ago have impacted and improved countless lives. But communities evolve and needs shift and it takes constant work to ensure that we are maximizing resources and that we remain accountable to our community.

You, the members of Manhattan Community Board 9, have been essential partners in all that we have built. You have always worked tirelessly to advocate for your constituents, and for that, you have my profound admiration and respect. I’m incredibly proud of all we have accomplished together, and I know that you will find in Minouche Shafik, Columbia’s incoming president, an incredible leader and partner to move things along into the next chapter. With that, let me thank you for your service and your partnership.

Sincerely,

Lee C. Bollinger



MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD:

It is with some sadness and a great deal of pride that I mark the end of my second term as Chair. Since joining Community Board 9 and especially since I had the honor of being elected Chair in 2019, I have continued to believe in the amazing work that our 50 volunteer members do to improve and defend our community with the assistance of our incredible staff.

With all of the work that we do and continue to have before us, it is easy to lose sight of just how much we have accomplished. Over the past 4 years, the Board has moved offices, said goodbye to two staff members with a combined 40 years of experience and hired their replacements, adjusted to virtual and now hybrid meetings relatively easily, and continued to hold our regular meetings. We did this all during the midst of a generation-defining pandemic, where it was an achievement to just keep the lights on and the trains running, so to speak.

That alone would have been impressive. But we did so much more. This Board went door-to-door to nearly every eligible restaurant and bodega in the neighborhood to educate them about the Restaurant Relief Fund of 2021 and encouraged them to apply, sometimes offering direct assistance. As a result, our district received over \$28 million in federal relief funds directly to our small businesses. This Board is the only reason that West Harlem had a COVID vaccination site in the first half of 2021, as we fought Mayor De Blasio and partnered with Governor Cuomo to bring access to these lifesaving vaccines to the elderly and immunocompromised and digitally disconnected in our neighborhood. We distributed PPE and test kits to those in our neighborhood who could not access them otherwise. We improved the proposal for a homeless shelter at 1763 Amsterdam Avenue, securing affordable housing units and a community benefits fund for Hamilton Heights. We forged ahead with the first Community Board-led neighborhood rezoning in the City's history as we resolved to submit our own rezoning plan for Morningside Heights when the Department of City Planning refused to conduct a rezoning study. We partnered with two of our public housing developments, Manhattanville Houses and Grant Houses, to work with local nonprofits to assist those residents returning from incarceration. We secured much-needed renovations and improvements of Jacob Schiff Park, Annunciation Park, Morningside Park, St. Nicholas Park, Hamilton Playground, Riverside Park, and Riverbank State Park, all within the span of four years. We continued the fight for justice for Tenant Interim Lease buildings, sometimes as the only Community Board championing the issue. We did all of this and more, as volunteers and dedicated community servants working together as a team in one of the most challenging moments in the history of our City. These fights and achievements meant that tens of thousands of lives in our district were changed for the better.

Those achievements would not have happened without the professionalism, collegiality, and above-all, the dedication to community service that was amply displayed by the current and past members of Community Board 9. We struck a balance between healthy debate and our full agendas, moved items by consensus when possible, and respectfully agreed to disagree and respect the vote of the full board when no consensus or compromise could be reached. That dedication to community and to service was matched and even exceeded by our staff. To Ray McLaughlin, Hleziphi Zita, Madison Ayala, and Hakeel Elliston, we owe a great deal of thanks. There is not enough thanks or praise in the world to be had to give to our incomparable District Manager, Eutha Prince, without whom none of what we do would be possible. It would also not have happened without the countless volunteers and other community members who attend CB9 meetings, volunteer, and partner with CB9 to help us represent and support our community.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to remember those we lost over these past 4 years. During the pandemic, we lost some incredible members of CB9.... Walter South and April Tyler were giants in the history of the Board, and while they are deeply missed, their work, their impact, and their friendship lives on in CB9. Many others in our neighborhood passed away as well, too many due to COVID and the effects of the pandemic on our neighborhood and healthcare system. We owe it to them to continue our work to support, protect, and advance our community.

As I pass the torch to our incoming Chair, Victor Edwards, I can happily assure him that serving as Chair of this Community Board is one of the greatest honors one can have in New York City. I know we will be good hands under his leadership and with the support of everyone on CB9 and here in West Harlem.

Yours always,

Barry Weinberg
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 9

