

UPDATE FROM

[MARCH 2016]

# Gale A. Brewer

## MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT



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### **Public hearing on school space issues March 8.**

The impact of systematic, decades-long state underfunding of public schools in New York City continues. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity court decision almost a decade ago still has not been fully followed by the state of New York.

But there may be a bit of hope: there are budget proposals in Albany which could direct hundreds of millions in new funding to city schools. If passed, that funding could be transformational: new science labs, art & music studios, and mental health clinics could enhance our schools beyond imagination.

That's the purpose of a public hearing I'm conducting this month with the help of the Alliance for Quality Education. Come help us answer the question, "How can our schools best spend new money to improve facilities and programs?" Tuesday March 8, 2016, from 6 – 9 pm, at PS 125, 425 West 123rd St. RSVP at [bit.ly/OvercrowdedSchoolsNYC](http://bit.ly/OvercrowdedSchoolsNYC) or (212) 669-8146.

### **March 20: Up With Aging brain health event for older adults.**

Seniors make up more than 13 percent of Manhattan's population and that number is rising, as longtime residents age and empty-nesters move in. As we age, the human brain's responses and functions change, but too many neglect those changes even as we address other health issues. Fortunately, neuro-science is making strides every day, and as part of Brain Awareness Week, my office is joining with the Dana Foundation and the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives to host "Up With Aging," a multi-faceted event.

First, I'm hosting a 90-minute panel, "Successful Aging and Your Brain," with some of the world's leading scientists to discuss advances in the science, and what individuals can specifically do to maintain brain health. The panelists include:

- **Matthew E. Fink, M.D.**, Neurologist-in-Chief, New York-Presbyterian Hospital and Weill Cornell Medical Hospital.
- **Wendy A. Suzuki, Ph.D.**, Professor of Neural Science and Psychology, New York University Center for Neural Science.
- **Scott Small, M.D.**, Professor of Neurology, Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging Brain at Columbia University Medical Center.

After the panel, we've invited over 20 agencies, organizations and businesses who focus on aging adults to engage in activities to stimulate mind and body, including Zumba, yoga, technology lessons, and memory exercises.

Doors open at 12:30 pm; the panel begins at 1:30 pm; the exhibits will be open at 3:00 pm. Sunday, March 20, 2016, at the CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue (at 34th Street).

The event is free, but please RSVP by March 15th, at [upwithaging.eventbrite.com](http://upwithaging.eventbrite.com) or (212) 669-4564

### **LPC clears backlog and identifies 30 sites or neighborhoods for consideration.**

About a year ago, the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission planned to remove 95 backlogged potential landmarks from its calendar, en masse. These potential landmarks had been under consideration for years or decades, and while they hadn't received a final decision, they had some city protection provided by the fact that they were under consideration. They would all have lost this protection immediately if they were removed from the Commission's calendar.

Working with preservationists and neighborhood groups, my staff and I developed an alternative plan for dealing with this backlog—one driven by public input. We all agree that potential landmarks shouldn't sit without a decision for decades, but we also knew these potential landmarks deserved a sort of due process.

To the Landmarks Preservation Commission's great credit they adapted our plan, holding hearings on the entire backlog. Last week, the Commission met and decided to put 30 of the backlogged items on the path to landmark status, including gems like the Excelsior Power Company building downtown, Bergdorf Goodman, the IRT Powerhouse on the West Side, and the Loews Theater in Washington Heights.

### **Many New Yorkers qualify to file their taxes for free. Do you?**

If you or someone you know earned \$62,000 or less in 2015, you may qualify for free tax preparation services, including online filing and in-person filing with a certified preparer. There are over 200 NYC Free Tax Prep sites or you may file online at [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep).

The two methods have different rules. For most in-person sites, the annual income must be \$54,000 or less (with children) or \$30,000 or less (no children). Preparers certified by the IRS will help you claim important tax benefits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and NYC Child Care Tax Credit (NYC CCTC). Some sites even let you drop off your tax documents and pick up the completed return later!

If you prefer to file online, annual income can be as high as \$62,000; step-by-step instructions make it easy to claim credits like the EITC and NYC CCTC to get a bigger refund. It's fast, secure and free—and experts are available by phone to answer questions. Visit [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep) or call 311 and ask for tax assistance.

### **My Black History Month reception honored Harlem photographers.**

Manhattan is a global center of the arts, and Harlem is a vital part of why that's true. It was my privilege to recognize some of Harlem's amazing photographers as part of my Black History Month event on February 29.

Shawn Walker, Ming Smith and Kwame Brathwaite have all had pioneering careers and are still shooting today, and it was wonderful to meet them and hear more about their careers.

**Photos from my State of the Borough event are now available! Take a look and browse my other event photos on [Flickr](#).**

## **EVENTS**

### **Throughout March: Tenant clinics in my Northern Manhattan Office.**

*Times vary (see below), 431 W. 125th Street*

Tenants who live between 34th St. and 100th St. west of Fifth Avenue, OR anywhere in Manhattan if they have an existing Housing Court case, have a child under 18, and have some form of public assistance can obtain help from an attorney from Housing

Conservation Coordinators at any of the regular legal clinics in my Northern Manhattan Office. Walk in or RSVP to (212) 531-1609. March dates and times are:

- Wednesday, March 2 from 3-5pm
- Thursday, March 10 from 5-7pm
- Wednesday, March 16 from 3-5pm
- Thursday, March 24 from 5-7pm
- Wednesday, March 30 from 3-5pm

**Throughout March: Harlem United affordable health care enrollment.**

*Times vary (see below), 431 West 125th Street*

Working with Harlem United's Enroll Manhattan Project, my Northern Manhattan Office is providing community members and their families with the opportunity to more easily enroll in an affordable health care plan with low- to no-cost coverage that suits your needs. We'll have multi-lingual staff to assist you in English, Spanish or French every Monday from 10am - 2pm and alternating Thursdays from 3 - 5 pm. March dates are:

- Thursday, March 3 from 3 - 5pm
- Monday, March 7 from 10am - 2pm
- Monday, March 14 from 10am - 2pm
- Thursday March 17 from 3 - 5pm
- Monday, March 21 from 10am - 2pm
- Monday, March 28 from 10am - 2pm
- Thursday March 31 from 3 - 5pm

**Mondays in March: SNAP/food stamp clinics in my Northern Manhattan Office.**

*10am - 5pm, 431 W. 125th St*

My Northern Manhattan Office is again teaming with the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) to make SNAP benefits (once known as food stamps) easier to obtain at a screening and recertification clinic with WSCAH in a demonstration project that allows applicants or recipients to be screened, apply, or be recertified to receive SNAP benefits. All participants should bring ID, a social security card, proof of address, rent, utilities & income. Walk in, or RSVP (212) 531-1609. March dates are:

- Monday, March 7
- Monday, March 14
- Monday, March 21
- Monday, March 28

**March 21: LGBT New York City Agencies Resource Fair.**

*6 - 8pm, NYCHA Johnson Houses Community Center, 1833 Lexington Ave*

My office is teaming with the LGBT Task Force of Community Boards 9, 10, 11, and 12 and NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito to present a resource fair on services available from city agencies to the LGBT community.

**In the gallery: Point of View New York City, a visual game of the city you think you know.**

Janko Puls' distinctive imagery of well-known places in New York City is on display in our gallery this month— but the display has an interactive twist: viewers are asked to guess what each photo represents, with the answer hidden behind a card under each frame. Find out more at [www.pointofviewwnyc.com](http://www.pointofviewwnyc.com). Also on display are more experimental works by Puls shot in New York and other U.S. and European cities. Please visit the gallery during normal business hours, through March 31.