

NEWS FROM

[SEPTEMBER]

Gale A. Brewer

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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Close the “Poor Door.”

Like many others, I was upset to learn that a zoning loophole has enabled developers to segregate entrances for market rate and affordable-unit residents, forcing them to use two separate doors. I’m meeting with Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Been later this month to help hammer out changes to the zoning regulations to eliminate the “poor door” loophole and prohibit them in future developments.

Meanwhile, the development at 1 West End falls under the current regulations. I’m glad I was able to help negotiate an agreement with Silverstein Properties to ensure the maintenance of the permanently affordable units through a greater contribution from the developer. In addition, we were able to achieve a more inclusive community through shared open space and joint recreational programming.

Two task forces forming: African Immigrants and Seniors.

I’m delighted to announce that planning is underway to form an African Immigrant Task Force to advise me of the diverse needs of African communities within New York City. These immigrants have come from diverse countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, and the Ivory Coast, among others. They face myriad issues impacting their overall health, quality of life and security—and I look forward to learning more about how I can help.

In addition, my office is convening a Seniors Task Force to improve support and plan events for seniors in Manhattan. I’ve always worked toward a more age-friendly Manhattan, and this task force will help me do more!

Farm tour should help city buy local.

On August 12, my office organized a caravan of city and state officials to tour farms upstate in Orange County to help encourage procurement administrators to “buy local” for the New Yorkers they serve.

Maire Ullrich of Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County served as our guide as we visited Dagele Brothers Produce in Florida, NY, O’Dell Dairy/Back to the Future farm in Middletown, Porpiglia Farms in Marlboro, and met with a farmer from Hudson Valley Fresh, a nine-dairy partnership whose motto is: “From our cows to your customers in 36 hours.” When they started selling to a Taconic public school, the school saw a 300% increase in milk consumption!

Buying local is “win-win” for everyone—on taste, freshness, carbon footprint, and creating local jobs. I look forward to working with the agency procurement specialists to increase their local sourcing.

Commissioner Stacey Cumberbatch of Dept. of Citywide Administrative Services was so impressed by the tour that her office and mine are launching a new CSA foodbox program with GrowNYC—the folks who run the Greenmarkets—for employees in the city’s Municipal Building in just a few weeks!

Take the pledge!

On Women’s Equality Day, August 26, I joined with former Borough President Virginia Fields, Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, Assemblymember Deborah Glick, State Senator Liz Krueger, Liz Abzug (daughter of Bella), NYC

Campaign Finance Board Executive Director Amy Loprest, President of the National Organization for Women NYS Zenaida Mendez, and Hunter High School student Sarina Gupta to “take the pledge” to register five women voters before the October 10 registration deadline. Women have made giant strides in the fight for equal treatment and opportunity. But much remains to be done, and if women don’t register and don’t vote, it will take even longer. That’s why New York women should work to register other women—and make sure they turn out.

New staff.

I’m proud to welcome Lucille Songhai to our office as Director of Community Affairs. Lucille joins the office from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), where she led community outreach for the Authority’s capital construction projects and legislation. Lucille will manage my office’s five community liaison staffers and develop new community outreach strategies in collaboration with Manhattan’s Community Boards and local stakeholders.

EVENTS

September 3: Universal Pre-K enrollment information session uptown

Bonita Anderson, a Department of Education UPK Enrollment Specialist, will be available in my Northern Manhattan Office to provide information and answer UPK enrollment questions from parents. Families will have the opportunity to receive one-on-one assistance with pre-K enrollment. MBPO Northern Manhattan Office, 163 West 125th Street, 5th Floor. 4:00 pm—7:00 pm.

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness month.

I’ll be visiting the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center’s Pediatrics Department on September 10 to honor the patients, families and staff who are doing such great and hard work.

September 12: Gwen Adler photographic exhibit opening reception in MBPO Gallery

Photographer Gwen Adler’s work includes images of reconstructed photographic memories and architectural fabrications that examine material culture in time and space. The exhibit reception will be held Friday, September 12, from 6:00pm—8:00 pm in my office gallery, and it will be open during business hours until September 26. More about Gwen’s work at www.gwenadler.com.

September 15: school composting day of action.

I am a long-time proponent of collecting food scraps for composting. In 2012, I joined with a team of parents and the Department of Sanitation to start the Organic Waste Collection Program in eight District 3 schools. Since then, it has grown to over 100 DOE schools in Manhattan and will reach all Manhattan schools by October. Join me on Monday, September 15 for a Day of Action to distribute information and raise awareness about this important program! Call 212-669-4039 or visit <http://bit.ly/CompostingAction> to sign up.

September 18: Tenants, know your rights!

New York’s rent regulations are due to expire in 2015. Learn more about that, how to form a tenants’ association, deal with evictions and Housing Court, and more at this event. I’m delighted to cosponsor with State Sen. Liz Krueger. Lighthouse Guild, 111 East 59th St. (bet. Lex & Park), 6:30 pm—8:30 pm. No RSVP necessary.

September 30: Arts Mixer for public schools and arts organizations

My ARTSForward report, issued in June (<http://bit.ly/artsforwardnyc-pdf>), identified 43 schools serving 19,000 students which have no partnerships with arts or cultural organizations. That’s why my study called for more outreach and networking among public schools and cultural organizations—and I’m putting my money where my mouth is, sponsoring an “Arts Mixer” at el Museo del Barrio, to help connect schools with organizations willing to help. Please RSVP to my office, 212-669-4039, if your organization or a Manhattan Public School teacher/administrator would like to attend. el Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue, 4:00pm—6:00pm.

September 30: Work with children & families? Learn more about child support enforcement.

Together with the NYC Office of Child Support Enforcement, this event in my office is to educate community and faith-based organizations on how to connect community members to free child support workshops, job programs, and ways to reduce child support debt. 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor South, 9:30am—12:30pm. RSVP at 929-221-5008 or email outreach@dfa.state.ny.us.