

# Yonkers Rising

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Friday December 17, 2021

## Community Volunteers Help Resettle Afghans in Yonkers



The YonkersTimes.com and Yonkers Rising has learned about a heartwarming story involving Afghan refugees that are already in Yonkers, as the City is about to welcome another 50. Governor Hochul announced last week that 1,790 Afghan refugees that have been temporarily staying on Army bases are being relocated across New York State.

We were able to speak with Kathie O'Callaghan, founder and President of Hearts & Homes for Refugees, a Westchester non for profit that has been working since 2016 to raise money and seek volunteers to help and welcome refugees. We learned a few things from our conversation with O'Callaghan and Hearts & Homes about the work that they do.

First, the money raised from donations goes to support refugee families get on their feet, with a home and other basics, from three months to one year, until they are acclimated and become active participants in their communities.

Recently, Hearts & Homes helped place an Afghani family in an apartment in Yonkers. Before they moved in, a volunteer crew arrived and cleaned and fixed up the apartment. The landlord was so impressed with the volunteers and the total effort of this organization that he offered to house another family from Afghanistan, and then a third family. So now there are three families from Afghanistan who are living in this small apartment building in Yonkers, and the landlord has welcomed them with open arms.

The landlord is happy because the rent is paid for one year, with donations and funds raised from groups like Hearts & Homes. The immigrant families are learning the language and the children are going to school and the adults are getting jobs. As a Community Sponsor, Hearts & Homes helps families with rent, groceries and other first-year needs.

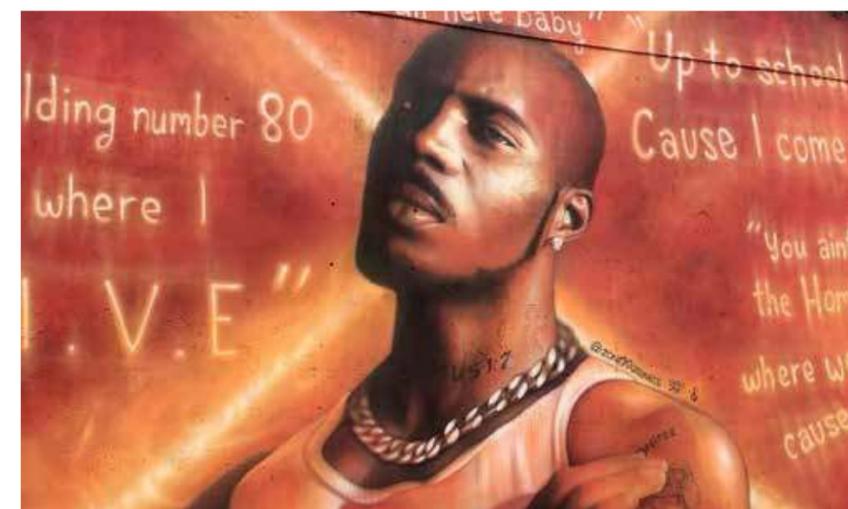
Community Sponsors are privately funded volunteer-driven groups that offer community connections to resettle refugees in partnership with U.S. State Department agencies. CS volunteers find and furnish apartments, provide community and cultural orientation, enroll children in school, offer ESOL support for families, navigate social services and the healthcare system, employment and career assistance, and navigate a new culture and language.

The time and resources offered by community sponsors to arriving refugees offer better chances for successfully meeting their goals of integration and independence

Question to O'Callaghan,-Where will the 50 arriving Afghani immigrants move to? Answer: They will move to apartments in and around Westchester.

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## Come out to Hip Hop Throw Down Dec. 18 for DMX's B-Day



The top 10 finalists in the Yonkers Hip Hop History Month contest have been announced in advance of live performances scheduled for December 18 in celebration of the late rapper Earl "DMX" Simmons' Birthday.

The lucky winners will be invited to a live performance at 10 Brook Street (School Street Gym) in Yonkers from 4-8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 18. The top five winners will be announced that evening and get to perform their songs for a panel of celebrity judges. Hundreds are expected to attend the live "throw down" including members of DMX's family. Seating is limited inside, and an overflow tent will also be available.

Yonkers has a rich history of great musical artists. DMX, The Lox, and Mary J. Blige all hail from Yonkers. DMX and Mary J. Blige grew up in Yonkers' public housing. New York State has declared December 18 DMX Day in honor of the late rapper.

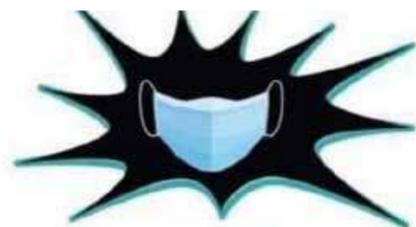
Wilson Kimball, President and CEO of the Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers (MHACY) became fascinated by the role public housing played in the development of Hip Hop stars after MHACY and Def Jam Recordings unveiled a memorial mural to DMX, who died in April and lived at 80 School Street in Yonkers. He also developed many of his famous rhymes while visiting his friend DJ Superior at MHACY's Mulford Gardens.

Kimball assembled some notables with Hip Hop cred to serve as a panel of judges including local DJ Superior and members of Sporty Thievez. "I was not a fan of hip hop growing up, but I came to appreciate Hip Hop after DMX passed away earlier this year," said Kimball. "First, I realized he was around my age. Then, I realized he grew up in MHACY housing. Lastly, I realized his music came from a dark, real, and honest place. I may not have had the same challenging childhood in the same place, but I understood what he was going through because his lyrics are so compelling."

Mayor Mike Spano said that the contest would not only help to showcase new

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## Parents Split on Students & Masks: Some Don't Want Masks for Their Kids; But Most Parents Want Their Kids Safe & In School



**M·A·S·K·S**  
Make All School Kids Safe

The Yonkers Board of Education heard from parents against mandating students to wear a mask in Nov., and from parents who support the mask mandate in the YPS

# UNMASK OUR CHILDREN

**#LETKIDSBEKIDS**

*By Dan Murphy*

A debate has begun in the Yonkers Public Schools over the mandate requiring all students to wear masks during instruction. The debate began last month when a group of parents from United Yonkers came to a Board of Education meeting to call on the school board and YPS Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada to lift the order and leave the choice up to parents whether or not to have their children wear a mask in school.

Parents who support the mandate came to the YPS meeting on Dec. 15 to push back against the argument to unmask our kids. All of the discussion is despite a recent mask mandate order from Governor Kathy Hochul throughout the State to

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## Yonkers Police Help Solve 29 Year Old Cold Case: Online DNA Websites Help Bring Families Peace



*Meresa Hammonds, right, in 1992, and a rendering of her 29 years later*

Cold crimes across the United States are being solved with the help of DNA evidence, but also with the help of genealogy database companies, which compile information for those looking for information on their family roots. A 29-year old Yonkers cold case was solved recently, thanks for Yonkers Detective John Geiss and the FBI. On June 27, 1992, an unidentified female was found dead in a dumpster behind I Love NY Pizza, on Midland Avenue. The case remained unsolved until this year, when Detective Geiss traveled to the families of Meresa Hammonds to inform them that the national DNA database had identified Hammonds as the victim of murderer Robert Schulman.

Schulman was arrested in 1996 for several murders on Long Island, and for the Yonkers murder, but he couldn't identify the woman that he killed, explaining that he picked her up and brought her back to his apartment where they smoked crack cocaine. When he woke up she was dead, and his dismembered her body and left it in a Yonkers dumpster on Midland. Schulman was convicted of several murders and died in prison in 2006.

YPD Det. Geiss reopened the case in 2014 and used the advances in DNA technology to see if he could find a link to ID the victim. Eventually, the evidence went from the Westchester County forensics lab to the national DNA database. And this year, 2021, the FBI was able to link the DNA from the victim to members of her family who had used a genealogy website. And, after the family was contacted in person by Det. Geiss, 'Yonkers Jane Doe' was identified as Meresa Hammonds, who was 31 when she was killed.

Carl Koppelman, a Volunteer Forensic Genealogist at DNA Doe Project made the announcement on Facebook on Dec. 8. "1992 Yonkers Jane Doe IDENTIFIED. On June 27, 1992, a construction worker searching for a lost lottery ticket discovered the body of a woman in a trash dumpster behind the I Luv New York Pizza parlor at 1288 Midland Ave in Yonkers, New York. She was unidentified for 29 years, known simply as "Yonkers Jane Doe". She is one of five victims of serial murderer Robert Schulman, a 42-year-old postal worker, who was active from 1991 to 1995. He was originally sentenced to death, but his sentence was later changed to life without parole. He died in prison in 2006. The woman has now been IDENTIFIED, and I have the OK from her family to let the followers of my page know that her name is Meresa Hammonds. She was born in Kentucky in April of 1961, and was one of

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## Who Has the Best Holiday Lights in Yonkers?



Mayor Mike Spano and the City of Yonkers has come up with a Yonkers Holiday Lights contest, to showcase the sharing of the season that many homeowners provide. Every one of Yonkers 39 neighborhoods has one or more homes that goes above and beyond the norm when it comes to putting on a holiday light show for all to see.

Submissions for the contest have ended and the final four will be announced on Dec. 17. We will share those results with you, and with your help, will try to compile a list of the best light displays in Yonkers, so that you can drive around one night with your family, and take a look.

Also look on social media for #YonkersHolidayLights. Photo above (c) Robert Kalufs.

## Holiday Splendor at the Hudson River Museum, Ready for Your Visit



By Angelique Piwinski, HRM Board of Trustees Member and a Yonkers Historian

It's the holidays and great time to plan a visit to Yonkers' and Westchester's cultural and historic gem, the Hudson River Museum located on the shores of the majestic Hudson River at 511 Warburton Ave. in Yonkers and "Glenview", the John Bond Trevor mansion, an historic part of the museum complex.

This month until January 9th you can experience what life was like in 1877 when the mansion was completed and learn about Gilded Age holiday traditions on a 45-minute tour of the six fully restored period rooms. A stunning Rainbow Tree holds court in the Parlor surrounded by gifts, and decorated trees adorn the Sitting Room and Library. The beautiful woodwork on the mantels in the Library, Great Hall, and Sitting Room are bedecked in elegant wreaths, ribbons, and flowers. The Dining Room features a tablescape with gilded place settings and a chandelier adorned with fir greenery and ornaments.

Explore the cabinets around Glenview to find the favorite books and toys of Victorian era children, including a nineteenth-century doll, ivory chess set, beloved children's books, and a well-loved teddy bear. In addition, Nybelwyck Hall, Yonkers favorite 24-room dollhouse, is also beautifully decorated for the holidays.

The original museum was housed in the mansion for a number of years until the campus expanded and now is a major architectural and historic attraction drawing visitors from around the globe. The history of both the 144 year old mansion and the over 100 year old museum is long and complex. You can read about it and all of the goings-on at the museum that constantly change by visiting the museums website: [hrm.org](http://hrm.org). There is a continuing array of arts, culture, science and history reflecting the diversity of our communities with over 350 separate programs a year. Everyone will see themselves somewhere in this incredible institution.

One can only imagine what life was like for the John Bond Trevor family back in 1877 when the mansion was completed and thereafter during Victorian times. Every square inch of the building is packed with history and it is so important to learn about it and understand it because in the beautifully crafted words of the Rev. Alison who wrote a book about the History of Yonkers in his book published in 1896, he said that "history honors the "elders" and teaches the youth to make the past intelligent to the present for the guidance of the future."

To that end the museum has a wonderful award winning multicultural junior docent program for high school students where they learn a tremendous amount about history, the arts, culture and life skills.

The museum is currently undergoing an expansion that will allow even more

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in Yonkers PRESENTS  
Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>  
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2006

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The Washington Times  
2005

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**Toys for Tots & Salvation Army Kettles Offer a Reliable Place to Make a Holiday Donation**



If you have come up to the end of this holiday season realizing that you haven't done enough for those less fortunate, two of the most respected organizations that could use your donation are Toys for Tots, Westchester and the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign. Both organizations are easy to find this time of year. The red kettles are outside most supermarkets or stores, and the collection boxes for Toys for Tots are also all over Westchester. We spoke to Westchester coordinator for Toys for Tots, Steve Topilnycky who told us "While the area has opened up (although new restrictions are now upon us), we definitely had more drop off locations than last year. But overall, the donations seem to be down. We will be servicing over 25,000+ Children this year in the Westchester Area. This year we did spend a record breaking amount in purchasing toys to fill short falls, in addition to the toys provided by the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation. As many American families are struggling to make ends meet, and many parents will be unable to provide even a single gift for their children this Christmas -- without help from Toys for Tots! Please find it in your heart to make a gift to make sure Santa visits every child this Christmas, no matter their circumstances."

Make Checks Made Payable to "Toys for Tots", and mail to Toys for Tots, PO Box 1207, White Plains, NY 10602-1207 Or by Credit Card (we use short links) [http://tiny.cc/\\_dnt](http://tiny.cc/_dnt) which will take you to the Foundation Credit Card page for Westchester County.

The Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign is another easy way for you to make a quick contribution on the way out of a store. This one is easy for me to reach in my pocket and do something, because I know that the person who is ringing the bell has a job because of this fund raiser and because I know that I can trust the Salvation Army to do the right thing with my dollars and help those who need it.

**Mask 'Meshuggahness' in New York**



*By Eric W. Schoen*

Let me start out by being clear. I am not a doctor. I speak to a lot of health care professionals and like to share their advice with my good readers. Why? Because frankly we are all going 'meshuggah' over Covid and it's variants and mask wearing.

I support the wearing of masks indoors and when you are around people with comorbidities. I support vaccinations and boosters with one caveat. Washing your hands, well that's something you should have been doing since you were 2 years old. Shame on you if you have not been rinsing your hands with water, applying soap, rubbing your hands for 20 seconds (sing 'Happy Birthday to You' twice), rinsing them off and drying them with a 'clean' paper towel.

No paper towels but those stupid hand dryers? Make sure your hands are cupped so that the air bouncing off your hands is not blowing on your face. That air could be spreading droplets of the virus in the air right onto your face. No good!

The mask policy announced by Governor Hochul last Friday though well intentioned was put into effect poorly. Businesses and the public need more than 4 days to to fully understand the law and attempt to enforce it. The Governor should have given businesses and municipalities at least one full week if not ten days or two weeks to figure out what's going on. I'll get into the problems shortly. But let me tell you about my visit to the gym Tuesday morning.

I went to my gym's Yonkers location for my aqua exercise class. I recommend it highly as it is a low impact, high intensity full body exercise program. I take aqua exercise classes at my gym's Bronx location Thursdays when I am not on the radio where the class is offered Tuesday through Thursday mornings. I go to sign in and am told by the receptionist I need a mask per Governor Hochul's new policy.

I said wait, I had to provide proof of vaccination at your Bronx location so why do I need a mask? They said Westchester does not have a vaccination policy whereas the Bronx does. So to use the Yonkers facility one needs to mask up. I thought about that as I splashed through my exercise class. I apologized to the receptionist for questioning her.

A Vaccination Policy in Westchester? Something our poor County Executive George Latimer should think about as he recovers from Covid. At least a vaccination policy that covered those areas in New York City's initial Vaccination policy. This way we have some uniformity

People were wearing masks upon entrance to the gym. When I looked at the two gym floors chock full of people exercising on equipment, most folks either had their masks off, were wearing them below their chin or were not covering their nose and mouth as required. So much for mask policy! People were paying no attention to the announcements over the intercom that they were required to be masked in the gym. I told the manager that they have to assign a staff member to go around the gym telling people to mask up.

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## YPD Commissioner Mueller in Albany to ask for Bail Reform: Eliminate Cash Bail, But Let Judges Keep Repeat Offenders in Prison

On December 9, the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police sent to Governor Kathy Hochul, State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie a number of proposed amendments to the State's bail law, criminal discovery law, and other criminal justice laws that have an every-day impact on the public's safety. You can find a link to our legislative proposals on our website at [www.nychiefs.org](http://www.nychiefs.org). Members of the Association joined the family members of victims of violent crime at the State Capitol to make a pledge to protect our communities.

These common sense changes will fix several issues with these laws which have undermined the justice system and threatened the safety of all New Yorkers. These amendments will achieve a balance between maintaining the spirit of necessary criminal justice reform and enhancing the safety of our communities through continued collaboration, as well as ensuring fairness to crime victims and the accused.

"We in NYS law enforcement fully recognize and acknowledge the need for the many criminal justice reforms that had been passed in 2020. Since that time, we now have had a considerable amount of time to evaluate the data as it relates to the legislative changes. We are now in a position to share what we think are common sense adjustments that address the small subset of our most prolific and violent offenders that drive crime in all offense categories. I am confident that our recommended changes strike the appropriate need for criminal justice reforms while at the same time, gives us the tools we need to keep our communities as safe as possible," said Commissioner John Mueller, Yonkers Police Department.

Key parts of the Proposed Amendments:

**Bail:** Eliminate cash bail altogether by eradicating the inequities that allow wealth to determine freedom; Allow judges to consider a defendant's public safety risk, so that the people who pose the biggest threat to our communities do not continue to endanger our communities.

**Criminal Discovery:** Stagger the discovery schedule to ease administrative burdens while at the same time providing enough information to defendants to make informed decisions; Limit discovery to relevant and material information and not to all information that is tangentially related to the case and provides no probative value; Allow the prosecution to answer ready for trial if they have substantially complied with discovery, preventing cases from being dismissed because duplicative and non-material information is provided later in the discovery process.

**Juvenile Justice – "Raise the Age Law"** Allow judges in Youth Part to see family court records so that defendants do not appear in front of the Youth Part judge as a perpetual first time offender; Amend the statute of limitations in family court so that individuals who commit crimes days before their 18th birthday can be prosecuted after their 18th birthday.

**Appearance Tickets:** Expand the list of crimes for which police are not required to issue appearance tickets to include additional serious offenses; Limit the ability for chronic offenders to continually receive appearance tickets so that they are not immediately released back into the community.

"No one here disagrees that reform was necessary. We have always said that. But these laws have had immediate unintended consequences on the safety of our cities. We believe these proposed changes can accomplish both goals: bringing important reforms to the criminal justice system while not making our streets more dangerous," said Commissioner Dermot Shea, New York City Police Department.

"I remember my son each and every day. We cannot forget him and others who have been lost to gun violence. We have to do everything we can to make sure that the violence stops and no one else loses their lives prematurely, and that starts with keeping dangerous people off of our streets. Judges in New York State need to have discretion to remand people who continue to plague our communities with violence and crime. These laws need to be fixed now," said Eve Hendricks, a Bronx mother who lost her seventeen year-old son, Brandon, in 2020 when he was struck by gunfire while attending a barbecue.

### Afghan refugees, continued from pg 1-

Some Yonkers residents complained how come Yonkers gets all of the immigrants and the homeless, and half of the affordable housing units in Westchester? Why can't these immigrants move to Scarsdale?

O'Callaghan's answer made sense to us, but may not appease those who are fearful of foreigners. Yonkers is the third largest city in NY and the rents for those apartments are among the most reasonable in Westchester.

"Yonkers is a wonderfully diverse community that offer so much for our new neighbors as they establish their new lives, said O'Callaghan, who did add that refugees have been resettled throughout Westchester County, including in Pelham, White Plains and elsewhere. Yonkers also has the ability for a new family to get around without a car, and the ability to get to the subway if they want to work in New York City.

The \$5 Million in State grants announced by Governor Hochul on Dec. 8 will go to support programs, but the money raised by Hearts & Homes goes to the 'Nuts & Bolts' that the families need; housing, food, clothing, furniture. O'Callaghan notes that "Hearts & Homes depends on private funders and donors and have never received government funds."

Another complaint was raised by some in Yonkers. We have homeless on the streets already, and homeless Veterans. What about them? Why can't we help them first?

O'Callaghan said, "One is not exclusive to the other, and many of our volunteers serve other populations in need. They have worked with the homeless, in food pantries, on community drives, and in other places that serve many, including our veterans. There is enough goodwill to help all those in need—including homeless vets and refugees."

Federal funds will also help these refugees get on their feet.

Here is what one Veteran told us. "We were in their country for 20 years, and then left abruptly. The least we can do for those who worked with us in Afghanistan is to give them a chance here in America. That is what this country is all about. They are good people who want nothing more than a chance. I'm from Yonkers and I'm willing to give them a chance," said Robert Mozian.

O'Callaghan pointed out that many of those Afghans who are arriving with Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) because they risked their lives to work with and protect our troops." We promised them and their families our protection."

In addition to Hearts & Homes, Catholic Charities, and other non-profits that have been approved by the U.S. Government and working to give these refugees the help and support they need in the first year in our country.

O'Callaghan requested volunteers, and the Yonkers community, to come forward to help these Afghans as they relocate into their City. Donations are also welcome to Hearts & Homes. For more information, visit <https://www.heartsandhomesforrefugees.org>.

### Parents debate YPS Mask Mandate , continued from pg 1-

wear a mask indoors, and support for the policy from YPS Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada and the Yonkers Board of Education, who said during the Nov. board meeting that the mask policy "is out of the circle of our control. It's a Governor's mandate. Everyone here has the right to express themselves, but we have kept our schools open because of the mitigation strategies that we have put in place."

Ever since the COVID pandemic began in 2020, Quezada's #1 priority has been to keep the Yonkers Public School open for as long as possible, because he knows the difficulties that many YPS students have with at home learning.

But parents from United Yonkers, who oppose the mandate and attended the Nov. meeting, disagreed with Quezada that masking is working.

YPS Parent Margaret Madden said on News 12 after the meeting, "We don't believe that (masks mandates are working to keep children safe). We are looking at the science, and we are pushing for parental choice. If you think your kids should wear a mask, put a mask on your kid but we think its making it worse."

Other United Yonkers parents at the Nov. YPS BOE meeting called mask mandates "about freedom of choice," and another called mask mandates a form of "child abuse."

No parents spoke in favor of the mask mandate at the Nov. 17 meeting, but about the same number of parents came out on Dec. 15 to support Dr. Quezada, the Board of Education, and the policy of requiring students to wear a mask.

Yonkers resident Eileen O'Connor said, "Hello, my name is Eileen O'Connor. I live in Yonkers. My daughter, Maeve, attended public school here in Yonkers. I am a family nurse practitioner and work in a Family Practice in the South Bx. I worked for 10 years at the Valentine Lane Family Practice, in SW Yonkers.

"I speak tonight as a parent and as a health care provider who cares for young children. When I ask my young patients "how does it feel to be back at school?", they tell me "its so good to be there with my friends!" It's so nice to see their teacher in person! I ask them how is it to wear a mask all day and they tell me. "Its ok.."

"It's ok"...several studies now show that masks make a big difference in keeping our kids and teachers safe! There is no question about that. And the kids are OK.

Kids get their cues from adults. If we model wearing masks indoors in public spaces without making a fuss, they will follow.. Children are smart: They figure out how to read body language, the visible parts of the face and the tone of speech. Yes, of course, it would be better if we could all take these masks off! But not at the risk of transmitting this virus, that is so contagious! It's killed 800 thousand of us! Our grandparents, parents and yes even some children.

What we should all be advocating for is the safest environment possible for teachers, support staff and children, so that in person school can continue, despite the surging Covid cases here in Yonkers, Westchester and the US .

Ventilation systems need to be top notch..are they? Are there enough hepa filters in the class rooms?

Have the teachers a space to decompress? I know that after seeing 2-3 patients, while wearing my n95 mask, I need to remove it and put a surgical mask on. Do the staff have a space for that? I believe the children get to take their masks of periodically during the day.

Let's come together as parents and community members to support our children, our teachers, the staff! How can we help them?

To the BOE, stand strong to keep our kids safe! Make sure the ventilation systems are working well! Create safe spaces for our teachers and support staff who are working so hard during this pandemic! And yes, let's keep masking up," said O'Connor.

Other groups that support the mask mandate include Teachthetruth914.org. One member of Teach the Truth Westchester, told us that their same groups that opposed the teaching of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the NY Public schools is also opposed to requiring that students wear masks in school. Save our Schools, SOS, for Westchester has led the effort against what they call Critical Race Theory, CRT, in the Yorktown and Eastchester school districts.

But the debate hasn't landed in Yonkers until now. This is a medical and scientific fact. The recommendation from the CDC is that we should wear masks indoors in groups and that masks prevent the spread. People who oppose this mandate are politicizing the issue. Now they want to complain to the Governor about her recent mask mandate," said one Teach the Truth Westchester parent.

"They believe that its unhealth for children to wear masks in school. I would rather my child wear a mask then catch COVID and spread it to a classmate or bring it home to a family member that is immune compromised. We have to think about the overall public health and wearing a mask is not that big a sacrifice when compared to the risk."

Another Yonkers parent posted on Facebook. "I want my two children to attend their elementary school next year. If that means that they have to wear a mask then so be it, and they understand that and they don't want to get anyone else sick, or get their grandparents sick, so they will wear the mask and stay safe. The only thing I agree with United Yonkers on is that yes, forcing my children to wear a mask stinks, but what is the alternative? Having them learn at home with Zoom and no interaction with their classmates.? Have they thought their opposition through?"

### Cold Case solved, continued from pg 1-

seven siblings. She spent much of her early years living in California. When she was older, she moved to Michigan, and then to New Jersey, where she and her sister worked as fashion models," posted Koppelman.

Meresa Hammonds was one of seven children born in Kentucky. She eventually moved to New Jersey, and then fell on tough times. She was the mother of two sons, but had disappeared from her family at the time of her death. Two comments below Koppelman's post show us how Facebook can be used for the good of us all. "Carl koppelman I'm one of her sons . I'm truly thankful, and to detective John she will always be missed, was taken from all of us to young but like you said at least we know she was loved and can rest in peace. Best part is getting my mom's family in my life, because before all of this I had no clue who they were. Love every single one of the hammonds family truly grateful to have found you. Better late then never . Love all off you more then you could ever know. My mom was truly loved and blessed. Rip MOM 92'," posted Jason Di Trapani.

Jason's new family posted back, "Jason Di Trapani The Hammonds family couldn't be happier to have you in it now. It's the biggest blessing in the whole tragic situation. Let's make up for lost time as much as possible," posted Marcia Hammonds.

Another post from Teena Hammonds reads, "This is our beautiful sister Meresa, Misa she went by, she is the "Yonkers Jane Doe" she has a name, she is loved, she was taken from us by a Monster!!On Monday November 1st Dectective John Geiss from Yonkers police department showed up in Plymouth, Mi. at my brother's door Kimmy, he gathered his siblings living in Michigan to speak with Detective Geiss, very professional humble man, can't ever thank him enough and all the people looking for our sisters name/family,



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- 12/21 Cultivate Catskills Solstice Stroll | **Catskill**

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## Senator Mayer-Assemblyman Sayegh Gift Card Consumer Protection Bill Signed by Gov.

On Dec. 10, State Senator Shelley B. Mayer and Assemblyman Nader Sayegh announced legislation they sponsored (S3467B/A4629) to limit unfair gift card practices and to protect consumers was signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul. Gift cards and gift certificates are widely used financial products. They make great gifts for any number of occasions and are a significant component of consumer spending. Notwithstanding their popularity and affordability, consumers have long complained about the nuisance fees, small print limitations, difficulty in spending the last few dollars and cents, and impressions that the cards have expired, which means they stay unused or partially used, sometimes for years. This new law greatly enhances consumer protection to make it easier and less expensive to use these cards and gift certificates.

When it comes to expiration dates, unknown to many consumers, most gift card funds do not expire. Consumers often assume that once their physical gift card has expired that the underlying funds have expired as well, which is not the case. This legislation protects consumers by lengthening expiration dates on gift cards to at least 9 years – 4 years greater than required by the Federal Credit Card Act of 2009, thereby providing substantial additional time for consumers to continue using the same card. This reduces the likelihood that consumers will fail to redeem funds because of confusion over expiration of underlying funds, and helps them bypass the extra effort of requesting a new card for another four years.

Some gift cards also come with nuisance fees. For instance, dormancy fees penalize consumers for not using the card frequently. The law bans all fees on gift cards other than a one-time initial activation fee on “open loop” gift cards (gift cards that can be used anywhere rather than at specific merchants or service providers).

Senator Shelley Mayer said: “When consumers buy gift cards, they are trading their hard-earned money for the promise of a good or service in the future. I am pleased we are tightening the law to limit the loss of value that consumers experience with gift cards by improving consumers’ access to their entitled funds. Thank you to Assemblyman Nader Sayegh for sponsoring this bill in the Assembly and to Governor Kathy Hochul for signing it into law.”

Assemblyman Nader Sayegh said: “It’s just wrong to receive a gift card or gift certificate only to learn later that the value of the gift has automatically declined in value over time, or expired before it was used. That is why I introduced this legislation to prohibit all fees on gift cards and certificates purchased in New York and to greatly extend expiration dates. I thank Senator Shelley Mayer for winning passage of this bill in the Senate, and thank Governor Kathy Hochul for signing the bill right in the heart of the holiday shopping season.”

### Holidays at Hudson River Museum, continued from pg 2-

programming and history to be displayed to engage, inspire, and connect diverse communities through the power of the arts, sciences, and history. With this expansion the Hudson River Museum will more than double the number of artworks on view from its compelling permanent collection that contains 20,000 separate items, with a dynamic reinstallation that will tell a more expansive and inclusive history of American art through a diversity of artists, perspectives, and narratives.

If you’ve never been to the museum, there is even a state of the art planetarium on the complex with ongoing programs for all ages.

More about the Hudson River Museum: The Museum offers engaging experiences for every age and interest, with an ever-growing collection of American art; dynamic exhibitions that range from notable nineteenth-century paintings to contemporary art installations; Glenview, an 1877 house on the National Register of Historic Places; a state-of-the-art Planetarium; an environmental teaching gallery; and an outdoor Amphitheater. Accredited by the American Association of Museums (AAM), the Museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting these multidisciplinary offerings, which are complemented by an array of public programs that encourage creative expression, collaboration, and artistic and scientific discovery.

Isn’t it time to find out why the museum was recognized by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for “visionary leadership, distinctive collections, commitment to community and historically overlooked artists and histories” and why the museum was a winner of 2021 Best of Westchester Awards: Best Tourist Attraction, Best Historic Site, Best Art Gallery, and Best Nonprofit Event.

Hours and Admission: Hudson River Museum is open Thursday through Sunday, 12–5pm. During December 27–31 when school is not in session, additional tours are available Monday through Thursday at 1pm, and on Friday at 1 and 3pm. Vaccination required for entry: all visitors 12+ must show proof of full vaccination or a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of visit; those 18+ must also show proof of identity. Visitors under 12 may enter only if accompanied by an adult with proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of visit. Learn more and purchase tickets at [hrm.org/visit](http://hrm.org/visit) or call (914) 963-4550.

### DMX contest, continued from pg 1-

artists but would spotlight Yonkers as a city that has gone through an amazing transformation, especially in regards to the quality of its affordable and public housing.

“We have some incredible talent and creative energy here in the City of Yonkers,” said Spano. “This contest will not only help young artists, but is a great way to put a spotlight on the good things that are going on here in our city.”

The first-place winner will receive a \$500 gift card from MHACY and Def Jam and will be featured on the DMX social media feed. Runner ups will receive a \$100 prize. The top 10 winners and their videos are as follows:

Check The Stats by MellzS & Jakk Blakk - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UI7iVsStt8>

Thank U Lord by Paul Speight - <https://youtu.be/05SnW1e1-Ck>

Hard As Hell by Big Dev the Bad Guy - <https://vimeo.com/496282250>

Dog Love by CrookedSmile Coli - <https://youtu.be/AXJXBAJOHGg>

Wakewalking by Swing Furr - <https://youtu.be/ayfEDNkObqk>

Battle Lion by Crittermake & TDIMuzik - <https://youtu.be/0SKvmVv-ZMO>

So Yonkers by CASH B, LadySlim, JaeWon & Keem - <https://youtu.be/YtG42hwSs6w>

Yonkers Down To Ride by Dq The Don & Diao - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1uPQ7JUjQY>

Henny by Franziole B Buttons & CJP - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb08-19Rjr0&ab\\_channel=OfficialBButtonsVEVO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb08-19Rjr0&ab_channel=OfficialBButtonsVEVO)

2020 Experiment by Jae Nom, CJP, ODEJ & Renz Beatz - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrgRlPwZI\\_4&ab\\_channel=JaeNomVEVO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrgRlPwZI_4&ab_channel=JaeNomVEVO)

## On This Day in Yonkes History...



*Yonkers Pool shark Frank Farrell bought the yonkers raceway, (for himself or someone else?) in 1901*

*By Mary Hoar, President Emerita, Yonkers Historical Society, recipient of the 2004 Key to History and President Untermeyer Performing Arts Council*

Monday, December 20th

December 20, 1945: Fire routed more than 500 Christmas shoppers and employees from Genung’s Department Store on Main Street! Eight employees, all veterans who had returned from war a few months earlier, led the shoppers to safety. Arthur Alterwisher, Robert Brown, Don Cuzzo, Harold Dullum, Salvatore DiGirolemo, Michael Dirgs, Thomas Logue, and James McGinn did such a great job evacuating the store, although YFD arrived within a few minutes, just a few sales staff members still were in the store.

Although damage to the building was estimated at just under \$4000, the store reopened after windows on the east side of the building were boarded up and debris cleaned up. Fire Chief Garvin believed the fire was caused by a short circuit and personally tested every electrical circuit in the store.

December 20, 1955: Otis Elevator announced not only had it been retooling a portion of its factory for several months to make pinsetters, it had signed a contract to manufacture, install and service its new automatic pinsetter-bowling device!

Tuesday December 21st

December 21, 1945: Yonkers Library Director Grinton Will told library trustees their exploratory investigation of bacteria-killing lamps had piqued the interest of our local school and health officials!

December 21, 1955: According to a plan prepared for the Trustees of the Yonkers Board of Education, the budgeted \$200 teacher raises were “postponed,” and the money would be used to buy supplies, books, equipment and building repair.

December 21, 1955: The very last mass was celebrated at Yonkers’ Gray Oaks Hospital for Tuberculosis; the hospital on Saw Mill River Road was being closed by our city ten days later. Not only was there full approval of NYS, the state planned to consolidate services of 6 area tuberculosis facilities.

Wednesday, December 22nd

December 22, 1897: Frank W. Woolworth, founder of the Woolworth “Five and Ten” chain, signed a lease for the building at 27-29 North Broadway, owned by James McCann. The lease ran for five years and one month; the annual rent of \$3,600 was payable in monthly installments.

December 22, 1925: City Hall received notice Billy Cook’s Inn, a one time Yonkers hotspot, would be torn down for an apartment building. The Inn was on South Broadway between Post and Randolph Streets.

December 22, 1956: The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation announced Cetadiol, a drug designed to treat alcoholism, was developed using experimental components created at the Nepera Chemical Company. The Foundation Treated 43 patients hospitalized with advanced alcoholism with the drug, claiming all were “put back on the road to recovery.”

Thursday, December 23rd

December 23, 1935: The Central Committee of Organized War Veterans, 16 groups in all, sent Christmas packages to the 54 Yonkers men in Government hospitals; the men were suffering from injuries received in the World War (WWI).

December 23, 1945: The Kenealy-Kendrick Garrison Auxiliary, Army and Navy Union, entertained a group of patients from the Bronx Veterans Hospital at its clubrooms at 60 Riverdale Avenue.

December 23, 1955: Yonkers School Board Trustees, led by President James Park, directed School Superintendent Stanley Wynstra to “find out where the leak is.” Someone was giving unnamed New York City newspaper information before the Trustees received it, before it was approved. The suspicion was the leak came from a department director or supervisor.

Friday, December 24th:

December 24, 1917: More than 3,000 people attended the Christmas exercises at City Hall Park, Yonkers second Community Tree Lighting. After Christmas carols were sung, Fr. Richard Hughes of St. Denis’ Church spoke on “The Message of Peace,” stressing the need for an early peace and end to the war.

December 24, 1927: Ethelbert Belknap, the eighty-three year old superintendent of Philipse Manor Hall, announced over 7,000 people had visited the historical building during 1927; this was an increase of more than 1,000 people over 1926.

Saturday, December 25th:

December 25, 1940: Thieves smashed their way into the Steadman Music House at 24 Warburton Avenue, stealing three instruments, a saxophone, a clarinet and a trumpet; the instruments were valued at more than \$200.

December 25, 1940: For the first time since he had suffered injury eighteen months earlier, nine-year-old Bobby Sutherland went home to celebrate Christmas with his family! Bobby, who had been in St. John’s Hospital eighteen months with a bone infection, got a one day reprieve to celebrate at his Ridge Avenue home. Although his condition was called “satisfactory,” Bobby had to go back to St. John’s to continue treatment when dinner was over.

Sunday, December 26th:

December 26, 1901: Poolroom King Frank Farrell purchased the Empire City Track for \$218,000. Although there was much speculation about for whom Farrell was buying the track, he stated, “The track is mine and only mine.” It was purchased from the estate of William Clark, who passed away a few months after Empire City opened in 1899. Farrell said he would make improvements, including new stables and a railroad spur. He also planned to correct the problems with the grandstand; apparently it had been built on the wrong side of the track, so the afternoon sun on a nice day was unbearable to the spectators.

*Questions or comments? Email [YonkersHistory1646@gmail.com](mailto:YonkersHistory1646@gmail.com).*

*For information on the Yonkers Historical Society, Sherwood House and upcoming programs, please visit our website [www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org](http://www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org), call 914-961-8940 or email [yhsociety@aol.com](mailto:yhsociety@aol.com).*

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**Legal Notices**

**NOTICE OF SALE SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER DYNASTY, LLC, Plaintiff AGAINST CGSRE ACQUISITION CORP, ET AL., Defendant(s)** Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly entered 10-22-2021 I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Westchester County Courthouse, 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Courtroom 200, White Plains, NY on December 23, 2021 at 10:30AM, premises known as 68 Runyon Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10710. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the City of Yonkers, County of Westchester and State of New York, Section: 3 Block: 3112 Lot: 59+60. Approximate amount of judgment \$1,792,943.78 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index #50855/2019. The aforementioned auction will be conducted in accordance with the Westchester County COVID-19 Protocols located on the Office of Court Administration (OCA) website (<https://ww2.nycourts.gov/Admin/oca.shtml>) and as such all persons must comply with social distancing, wearing masks and screening practices in effect at the time of this foreclosure sale. Anthony J. Centone, Esq., Referee CLAIR GJERTSEN & WEATHERS PLLC 4 New King Street, Suite 140 White Plains, NY 10604 70260

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**Eric Schoen, continued from pg 3-**

On Monday I went to a major name convenience store in Yonkers open 24 hours a day and maybe 50% of the people were wearing masks. They had the same sign on the door saying unvaccinated people must mask up that was posted before Governor Hochul's mask policy went into effect. The poor clerk tried to tell people they had to mask up but frankly after some stupid idiots gave her a hard time she gave up. It's not worth \$13.50 an hour right now to deal with idiots that are going to fight you. Not even worth the \$15 minimum wage in New York City to deal with people over masks and Covid!

The minute the Governor announced the policy she should have communicated with every registered business in the state giving them full details as to what the policy is, signs that say NO MASK, NO SERVICE, PLEASE DO NOT ENTER signed by the Governor Herself making it crystal clear as to what is expected of them and who to call if they run into a problem.

Another major issue. This law come with fines up to \$1000 per violation. But who is going to enforce it? The County Health Department staff is busy inoculating people with first, second and booster doses, a public relations campaign to get vaccinations in people's arms and testing for Covid. The Governor provided them with bubkis, nothing. You want to enforce this policy. Provide counties with bodies to go store to store checking for enforcement. Call in the National Guard if need be to do the job. But don't give counties like Westchester 4 days to get properly staffed. It don't work that way!

Speaking of boosters, I know of 2 people who got their booster shots and died. I had no problem neither did my sister with our booster shots. But a friend of mine from South Africa who is a doctor offered the following advice. Talk to your doctor about it and don't rely on me or my friends. My friend the Doctor from South Africa thinks we are making too big a deal over the Omicron variant. In fact he feels that it has peaked and we need to concern ourselves with the Delta variant.

The South African doctor made a good point. He is in his late 30's, early 40's and did not get a booster. Instead he went to have his blood drawn to see if he had antibodies and if they were strong. They were so no booster shot for him. His father, also a doctor from South Africa is 68 years young and he made the decision to get the booster. The younger doctor explained his rationale as follows. Whenever he is admitted to practice in a new hospital he must provide proof of all of his childhood immunity. If he can't the hospital will require him to have his blood drawn to check that he has still has antibodies for things like MMR. If he doesn't he has to be vaccinated again. Why should the coronavirus be any different? Another doctor friend of mine did the same thing and was found to have antibodies and did not get the booster shot. Again before you follow this advice check with your health care professional because each and everyone of us has a different body composition.

Governor Hochul. I am not faulting this policy but businesses are going meshugah trying to enforce is with overburdened staff and mass confusion out there. We know you want to keep everyone safe this holiday season, but we have to put policies in place thoughtfully giving more than 4 days for enforcement!

Briefs: The Infrastructure Bill our Congressman Jamaal Bowman voted against could have provided funds for the reconstruction of the exit northbound on the New York State Thruway that takes you across three lanes to get to the Cross County, the Sprain, the Bronx River and the Hutchinson River Parkways. This exit is long overdue to be reengineered, repaired, redesigned, whatever word you want to use. Have you been receiving crazy amounts of emails from Bowman like I have. I think he finally woke up and realized he represents Yonkers and a good part of Westchester! His support for the Build Back Better bill does not makeup for his disgraceful vote against our nation's infrastructure.

My sister was waiting on the South East Corner of South Broadway and Caryl Ave in Yonkers when Bobby Kennedy's motorcade came by. He was campaigning. She asked for his autograph. He asked her to wait until he spoke to reporters and he would give it to her. She waited. He spoke to the press. Then he did what he said he would do and gave her an autograph. California Governor Gavin Newsome should ignore the members of the Kennedy family who want Sirhan Sirhan released and keep him in jail. Bobby Kennedy by the way was Governor Newsome's role model.

Every year at this time we pray for those poor souls who lost their lives in the Jewish Community Center fire on South Broadway in Yonkers December 20, 1965. The largest loss of life in a fire in the City of Yonkers. May their memory forever be a blessing. After all these years still so many residents and firefighters and their children remember it!

**Reach Eric Schoen at [thistoosyonkers@aol.com](mailto:thistoosyonkers@aol.com). Follow him on Twitter @ericyonkers. Listen to Eric Schoen and Dan Murphy on the Westchester Rising Radio Show Thursday's from 10-11 a.m. On WVOX 1460 AM, go to WVOX.com and click the arrow to listen to the live stream or download the WVOX app from the App Store free of charge.**

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Notice of Formation of Jovanna Realty LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 5/14/2021. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Jovanna Realty LLC, 100 Riverdale Ave., Apt. 8C., Yonkers, NY 10701 Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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***'Christmas With the Chosen' A Box Office Success; 1 Million Tickets Sold, \$13M Gross***

***South Broadway BID Tree Lighting***  
*Photos by Donna Davis*



***Mary and Joseph from Christmas With The Chosen***

Ms. Davis Photography 2021

The box office success of “Christmas With The Chosen: The Messengers,” shows that there is “room at the Inn” for a religious movie that follows the events surrounding the birth of Jesus from the perspective of Mary and Joseph, and that americans will step out of their living rooms and return to the movie theater for a special event.

The Messengers debuted in movie theaters only on Dec. 1, and was released in theaters by Fathom, 1,700 theaters across the country, including in Port Chester and at the Cortland Town Center in Mohegan Lake.

After the first day, \$1.5 Million in tickets were sold. After the first week, more than \$10 Million in tickets were sold, and now after a 12 day run in theaters, more than 1 million tickets were sold with a gross of \$13 Million. Not bad for a movie that was shown in less than half of the theaters across the country (1,700). Other big name movies released this month like The House of Gucci, opened in 3,400 theaters. Guicci has grossed \$38 Million.

“When we decided to do a special Christmas episode, we knew it would be the ideal moment to get this on the big screen,” said Dallas Jenkins, the creator and executive producer of The Chosen series. “It’s the first chance ‘Chosen’ fans have had to gather all over the country, so we intend to make it worth it. And with all the incredible musicians assembled, this is a perfect event for inviting friends.”

The Chosen series, which portrays the life and times of Jesus Christ, has become a global sensation. It’s first season was released in 2019, and was funded and supported through crowdfunding and a “Pay it Forward” effort where viewers supported the production, and their contributions helped others to watch it for free.

Seasons one and two of The Chosen were paid for by \$40 Million in donations, and The Chosen series has been downloaded more than 200 million times. The Christmas Chosen is now available at home and on The Chosen App. Learn more about “The Chosen” Christmas special at [TheChosen.tv/Christmas](http://TheChosen.tv/Christmas).



Ms. Davis Photograph

The Yonkers South Broadway BID held their annual tree lighting on Dec. 10. Festivities included stilt walkers, young carolers and Santa. The tree is located at the Lincoln Memorial at the corner of McLean Avenue & South Broadway.

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