

April 2007



Building Better Communities

News for
Bedford Stuyvesant & Ocean Hill/Brownsville Neighbors
from New York State Senator



Velmanette Montgomery

District Office: 30 Third Avenue, Room 1100, Brooklyn, New York 11217 • (718) 643-6140

Albany Office: 306 Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12247 • (518) 455-3451

Website: www.nyssenate18.com • **Email:** montgome@senate.state.ny.us

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ *Please be my guest!* ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

NYS Senator

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY

invites you to attend

Pathways to Homeowner Empowerment:
A Fact-Finding Forum for Homeowners and Homebuyers

Thursday, April 26, 2007 * 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Wayside Manor * 1720-26 Broadway
(Between Rockaway Avenue and Chauncey Street)
Brooklyn, New York

Whether you own a home or you are thinking about buying one, this forum will introduce you to state, city and local resources to help you make informed decisions about your future.

This event is **not-to-be-missed** if you have questions about:

- * Real Property Taxes and Assessments * Foreclosure Prevention
- * Low-interest Loans and Refinancing Options * Community Gardening
- * Joining a Block Association * Neighborhood-Based Crime Prevention
- * Grants for Block and Neighborhood Projects * Rodent Control
- * Finding Reputable Contractors * Local Traffic Issues
(i.e., speed bumps, stop signs and traffic lights)

Guest Speaker:

Martha Stark, Commissioner
NYC Department of Finance

Co-sponsors: NYC Council Member Darlene Mealy * Neighborhood Housing Services of Bedford Stuyvesant * Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corporation Bridge Street Development Corporation * Community Board 16

Community Affairs

Garden Party

The **Magnolia Tree Earth Center of Bedford Stuyvesant, Inc.** will host its annual Garden Party to support the Center on **Saturday June 23, 2007**, at 5:30 p.m. at its three-building brownstone complex at 677 Lafayette Avenue (between Marcy & Tompkins), in Brooklyn. For more information, call **718-387-2116**.

Free Adult Learning Classes

The **Bedford Learning Center** is one of five adult learning centers of the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) system that provide literacy, ESOL, and Pre-GED classes to adult Brooklynites who struggle with learning and literacy issues.

The **Bedford Learning Center** has been serving Brooklyn patrons for 30 years. It is located in the BPL's Bedford Branch at 496 Franklin Avenue (corner of Hancock Street). The Center provides individuals 17 years of age and older who are unable to read and write with an opportunity to develop reading and writing skills while helping manage their quality of life concerns.

Special instruction is also available to adults who want to prepare for their GED. The Bedford Learning Center has partnered with dozens of GED study sites for this purpose. For those who need help with their English language skills, the Brooklyn Public Library offers ESOL instruction in 13 neighborhood libraries throughout the borough.

In addition to its literacy programs, pre-GED and ESOL classes, the Bedford Learning Center offers monthly computer classes, health workshops, volunteer information

sessions, and on-line academic programs. The center also provides civic and immigration information to its patrons and gladly helps non-resident immigrants apply for resident immigrant status through the State Department's Diversity Lottery Program, which will take place in the fall of 2007.

For more information about the Bedford Learning Center programs, call **718-623-2134**.

Uniting Residents, Block by Block

In 1952, a small group of homeowners united to create what is now known as the **300 Block Association**. Its members are a vibrant group that continues to grow. Now more than ever, the Association is determined to unite its community and is interested in collaborating with other block associations to develop strong community ties.

If you want to participate in this effort, contact Kurtis Felton, president, The 300 Quincy Street Block Association at 718-638-2376 or Ray Knights, Association vice president at 718-789-7539.

Lifeguards Wanted!

The **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation** is recruiting qualifying youth 16 years of age and older who want to train and work as a lifeguard at City beaches and pools. First-year lifeguards will earn a minimum of \$11.72 an hour, and will be required to work 48-hours a week. The work season runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

Lifeguard training is free. To find out if you qualify for the free training program and how to become a New York City Lifeguard once you successfully complete the program, please call Senator Montgomery's office at **718-643-6140** or e-mail montgome@senate.state.ny.us.

Special Services for Special People

Elmy's Special Services, Inc. is a minority-owned, not-for-profit organization located in Bedford Stuyvesant that provides comprehensive social service programs to aide families and individuals diagnosed with mental retardation.

This service provider is located at 163 Van Buren Street in Brooklyn. At Elmy's quality is paramount! The staff works very hard to empower its clients — and to help them become independent, self-sufficient, contributing members of society. If you or some you know is interested in the services Elmy's provides, please call **718-789-7539**.

Here Comes The Bus



Senator Montgomery, Congressman Edolphus Towns (r) and Saratoga Square Houses residents meet the Metrobus at the housing development. The Senator arranged for MTA staff to answer questions and provide help to her constituents about all MetroCard matters.

Bed-Stuy Youth Call For Greater Investment in Education, School-Based Health, Summer Jobs

Championing the Cause of Producing DYNAMIC LEADERS



Youth Speak-Out: Senator Montgomery (third from left) at her Youth Conference with young people from Brooklyn Job Corps Academy and the Corps' Business and Community Liaison Kai Smith (left).

More than 200 youth from Bed-Stuy, Ocean Hill/Brownsville, and elsewhere in Brooklyn engaged in meaningful dialogue about health care, crime, after-school programs, jobs, higher education and other topics important to them and their peers at a recent Youth Conference sponsored by Senator Montgomery.

The forum was co-sponsored and hosted by the CAMBA Beacon IS 271 School on Herkimer Street, which is located in Montgomery's Brooklyn Senate District.

"They told it like they see it," Senator Montgomery said, encouraged that the young people didn't hold anything back when it came to expressing their concerns and asking questions of elected officials and other State and City policy makers. "The middle school and high school students were respectful and professional in every way."

Some young people testified about the lack of recreational opportunities in their communities. They underscored the

need for more recreational centers where they can learn how to swim, play basketball and engage in other sports. As a means to this end, they called for more funding for after-school programs that offer recreation as well as education programs.

"When I asked the young adults if they wanted to attend college, nearly every hand raised. They are excited about learning and about graduating high school and getting a college degree," Montgomery said, applauding their enthusiastic response. Senator Montgomery said that there is a tremendous need for academic tutoring, mentoring and pre-SAT and SAT preparation to help students obtain their high school diplomas as well as provide them with the academic foundation needed to attend and succeed in college.

"Our young people are desperate for employment and internship opportunities," the Senator said, noting that they spoke to the need for more funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program. They also called for an entrepreneurial/apprenticeship program that would provide exposure to different career paths.

In addressing this request, Senator Montgomery told the students that she has proposed the *Brooklyn Works for Youth* (BWY), a youth and career development program. It would provide paid internships and career-minded employment to Kings County youth between the ages of 14-19, with mentoring and jobs offered by not-for-profit groups, business organizations (i.e., merchant associations, LDCs), community boards, local businesses, and cultural institutions. The creation of the *Brooklyn Works for Youth* program is contingent on funding in the 2007-08 State Budget.

Other important issues raised by the young people included police department **"stop and frisk" policies** and the need for more **school-based health clinics** to provide students with access to medical and mental health services. In their overall discussion of school-based services, students asked for **more sex education classes** in order to learn more about sexually transmitted diseases and illnesses. They also talked about the lack of **nutritional meals**, the **shortage of computers and chemistry lab supplies**, and the **downsizing of art and music classes**.



Re-Entry Strategies: Senator Montgomery with criminal justice advocates who participated in her reC-O-N-N-E-C-Ting Formerly Incarcerated People with Their Communities workshop held during the 36th Annual Legislative Conference of the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, Inc. in Albany, New York.



Globally Speaking: Senator Montgomery and experts in the fields of health and global studies share their knowledge of traditions and practices from countries around the world at the Senator's Bringing a Voice to Women of the Diaspora: a Forum on Women's Health. The presenters and members of the listening panel included (l-r) Catherine Abate, Tracy Webber, Dr. Tosan Oruwariye, Carolyn Hannan, Virginia Tong, Carine Jocelyn, Yvonne Graham, Dr. Monica Sweeney, State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Leslie Wolfe, Janyce Jones, Purvi Shah (partially hidden), Emira Habiby Browne, Wilma Waithe, Brenda Smalls, and Dr. Iffath Hoskins. Photo by Donna Lamb



West Point Day: Senator Montgomery (center) honors West Point's cadets of color, some of whom hail from Brooklyn, following the official proclamation of March 21, 2007 as West Point Day in New York State. The Senator is flanked by Lt. Governor David Paterson (r) and NYS Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (l).

Please remember to **SAVE THE DATE** for:

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Presentations * Informational Displays * One-on-One
Networking with Housing Experts * Door Prizes * & More