

## BRINGING MTA SERVICES CLOSER TO HOME



On Oct. 29, I sponsored the MTA's MetroCard Van at three locations in this area – Morris Park, Pelham Parkway and Throgg's Neck. This service is a convenient alternative for seniors and those with qualifying disabilities to apply for and refill Reduced Fare MetroCards. I sponsor stops where I know there is a need. These events are always a great success, and I intend on continuing them as often as possible! My Chief of Staff, Michael Rivadeneyra, and I took a picture with MTA staff and a client.

## CHILDREN'S THEATER



It was great to see so many kids enjoying the Bronx Arts Ensemble's rendition of the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" puppet show at the Allerton Library on May 13. I was proud to sponsor the terrific performance.



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# COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES VACCA

2014 REPORT

**REPRESENTING:** Throgs Neck, Pelham Bay, Country Club, City Island, Westchester Square & Zerega, Morris Park, Pelham Parkway, Allerton

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## BRONX PHILANTHROPIST ELIAS KARMON STREET RENAMING

On July 13, I was proud to join the Karmon family and community leaders to unveil the street named in honor of Elias Karmon on the corner of Thwaites Place and Barker Avenue in Bronx Park East. I advocated for



the street to be renamed in his honor in the City Council. Often called "Mr. Bronx," Karmon was a pillar of the Bronx community. He helped rebuild parts of the Bronx and worked tirelessly to support community services for children, seniors and the arts. It is always a pleasure to honor exceptional New Yorkers like Mr. Karmon!

## HONORING A CITY ISLAND ADVOCATE

On Nov. 15, I proudly presented an award to NYC Department of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg at the City Island Chamber of Commerce's 104th Annual Awards Dinner Dance. Our



community spent years fighting for a redesign of the new City Island bridge. We are thankful for Commissioner Trottenberg's steadfast leadership, which helped us win that fight!



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## DEAR NEIGHBOR:

I hope you're enjoying the start of the new year! 2014 was a busy year! As Chair of the Technology Committee, I fought to improve 911, 311 and the overall technology operations of our city, and I will continue to fight for improvements to City services that preserve our quality of life.

Since becoming Council Member in 2006, I've allocated millions of dollars to enhance technology in schools. Students need to engage with technology early on which is why I secured funding for technology upgrades in many of our local kindergarten and pre-K classrooms. Additionally, I will continue computer education classes for seniors and will be working to ensure that the residents of my district are afforded the best wi-fi access the City has to offer – both from the new payphone initiative and in our parks.

Public safety has long been at the forefront of my agenda. Recently, I have spoken out against proposed laws that I view as irresponsible and would undermine crime fighting. I certainly realize that police and community relations can always be strengthened but I fail to understand how micro-managing the police department can lead to safer streets or protect our officers from harm. Good law enforcement means working with the police and communities on common sense solutions. I hope voices of reason will prevail going forth.

Education is big priority for me. Currently the Council is seeking to change the admission standards for our specialized high schools, such as Bronx Science and American Studies at Lehman College. As an educator, I strongly believe that the solution to expanding the pool of students eligible for admission to specialized high schools is to make middle school curriculums more rigorous rather than changing our current admission standards.

Lastly, there is nothing like the personal touch. I frequently attend local civic association meetings, tenant meetings, schools and senior centers to engage face to face about the important issues in our community. And that's why I want you to know that my office is always here to help and serve our neighborhood.

Yours truly,

**James Vacca**  
Council Member, 13th District, Bronx

## COLLABORATING WITH NEW YORK'S FINEST



I recently met with NYPD's Transit Chief Joseph Fox, Deputy Inspector Patrick Kerins and Assistant Chief Vincent Coogan in my district office to discuss policing issues in our transit stations. As your Council Member, I regularly meet with law enforcement to stay in touch with crime concerns and to collaborate on ways to keep our communities safe.

## SAVING LIVES ON THE NYC ROADS



Traffic collisions are a senseless cause of death in New York City. This year, I worked with my colleagues in the New York City Council and the Mayor to craft Vision Zero, a bold initiative intended to end such tragedies. Earlier this year, I sponsored laws related to taxi safety and speed cameras near schools that were passed as part of the Vision Zero legislative package. More recently, a cornerstone of this plan has gone into effect – the new 25 mph default speed limit. I hope this initiative will slow down speeding cars on residential streets and prevent dangerous traffic accidents.

## OPEN DATA



Open Data is the idea that citizens should be able to freely access as much government data as possible, such as information on restaurant health inspections and the location of noise complaints. The Open Data Law created the NYC Open Data web portal – <https://nycopendata.socrata.com> – where citizens can access this government data.

This invaluable tool can help the City Council better serve communities and unlock a world of solutions that will make New York City a better place to live. As Chair of the Technology Committee, I held an oversight hearing in October to examine the implementation of the Open Data Law. Moreover, to ensure that this wealth of information is used properly, I held a briefing to train City Council Members and staff on how to use the Open Data website.

Open Data has the power to transform city services and enhance the quality of life for all New Yorkers. My staff and I regularly use this web portal to keep informed about issues affecting my constituents.

## SECURITY CAMERAS FOR NYCHA RESIDENTS



Based on funding I provided, camera installations are underway in both NYCHA developments in my district! The technology is currently being put in place at Pelham Parkway Houses and installation has just begun at Throggs Neck Houses. I recently met with tenants of Throggs Neck Houses and NYCHA officials to oversee the plans.

## HELPING SENIORS ESCAPE ABUSE

Elder abuse is often overlooked. This year, I allocated \$48,000 from the City Council's Domestic Violence and Empowerment (DoVE) Initiative to The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Center for Elder Abuse Prevention – the nation's first elder abuse shelter. Housed at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, the shelter provides abused seniors with a path to a better life. Already I have met with Weinberg director Joy Solomon, and I am confident that our partnership will make a difference for those in need.

## OLDER AMERICANS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (OATS)



Since 2004, OATS has provided over 20,000 free classes to aging Americans, helping to close the technology gap that contributes to isolation and marginalization of aging people. I recently allocated \$5,000 to OATS for their computer literacy programs at RAIN Boston Road Senior Center and Bronx House. I visited the program on Nov. 10.

## THROGGS NECK VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS



On July 24, I visited the Throggs Neck (TN) Volunteer Ambulance office and I recently allocated \$7,000 for their initiatives. To get involved with TN Ambulance Corps, please call **(718) 430-9501**.

## NEW LIBRARY AT WESTCHESTER SQUARE

For more than a decade, I have been working to revitalize Westchester Square. A large piece of my commitment is the capital funding I secured to construct a new and modern library in the heart of the Westchester Square commercial area. Over the past few years, I have allocated more than \$12 million. I am deeply committed to making the area a premier destination for residents in east Bronx and will continue to commit resources to its development.

## KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY CLEAN



On Aug. 19, I joined community leaders in Pelham Bay to announce a partnership with The Doe Fund that will go a long way towards keeping our streets clean! I allocated more than \$68,000 to bring this innovative program to my district. So if you see non-city workers walking around the neighborhood picking up and bagging litter, know that it is all for a cleaner community!

## NEW LEGISLATION TO END PROLONGED ELEVATOR OUTAGES

For many residents in the Bronx and throughout the city, elevators are a necessity, not a luxury. When elevators break down, many residents – particularly the elderly, disabled, or parents with young children – are confined to their homes until the elevators are repaired, which in some cases takes days or even months. Months-long outages have happened right here in Pelham Bay, and I have learned that it has also happened in other buildings throughout the five boroughs.

Recently, I introduced a bill that would establish an emergency repair program to prevent prolonged outages. This legislation would force city agencies to repair elevator outages and bill the property owners for the costs if they are not fixed in a timely manner. I am confident that I will gain support in the City Council to pass this bill.

## FOOD DRIVES



In August, I kicked-off a week-long City Council food drive in honor of Mother Theresa's 104th birthday. That week, 33 Council Members collected canned goods and other food items for food banks and soup kitchens in their districts. In my district, we donated a significant amount of food to the Bronx Jewish Community Council's food bank in Pelham Parkway. Food pantries are almost always in need so I encourage everyone to give throughout the year.