

FIGHTING TO SAVE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The City recently announced devastating plans to cut funds to Beacon programs, school-based community centers serving children, youth, and adults, as well as to after-school programs known as Out of School Time, or OST. Both are well-utilized, popular programs on which City residents rely. At a time when the municipal budget outlook is finally starting to brighten after years of gloom, it makes absolutely no sense to close these programs.



Beacons and OST programs provide offerings ranging from tutoring assistance to athletic programs and cultural and recreational activities. Studies show that without such after-school programs, children are much more susceptible to falling into dangerous activities and to harming themselves or others. If the programs close, parents will have to either come up with the money to pay for private child care or put their children's safety at risk. At a time of continuing economic uncertainty, that is a choice no family should face.

When the City proposed similar cuts in the past, Council Member Weprin and his colleagues fought successfully for the restoration of the funding. This year, Mark Weprin is once again fighting to maintain the after-school programs in Queens.

MARK WEPRIN HELPS NYC BUILDINGS GO GREEN



The New York City Council recently adopted the Zone Green text amendment, which promotes green buildings in New York City. Council Member Mark Weprin, as Chair of Zoning and

Franchises, was instrumental in the passage of the legislation. Two years ago, the Green Codes Task Force, a group of leading practitioners convened by the Urban Green Council, released a set of recommendations to amend City regulations to promote green buildings.

Building on the work of the Green Codes Task Force, the Citywide zoning text amendment removes zoning impediments to the construction and retrofitting of green buildings. The measure gives owners more choices for the investments they can make to save energy, save money, and improve environmental performance. The changes will help bring our buildings into the twenty-first century while protecting the character and quality of life of our neighborhoods.

EMAIL LIST WANT THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM COUNCIL MEMBER MARK WEPRIN'S OFFICE?

Just send an email message to MWeprin@Council.NYC.gov with **ADD TO LIST** in the subject line and you will begin receiving occasional email updates from Council Member Weprin.

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NEWS UPDATE • SUMMER 2012

FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

MARK S. WEPRIN

PROGRESS TOWARD PROPERTY TAX REFORM FOR CO-OPS AND CONDOS



Council Member Mark Weprin has kept up the fight for co-op property tax reform. Pictured next to Council Member Weprin is City Comptroller John C. Liu, whose audits, conducted at the request of Council Member Weprin, found flaws in the City Department of Finance's computer system and a failure to inform property owners about significant changes in the methodology of calculating property valuations.

For co-op and condo residents, the real property tax assessment rolls have become a roller coaster. After unexpected double-digit and triple-digit assessment increases last year, some Eastern Queens co-ops are facing fifty percent increases in assessed value this year, at a time when market values are essentially still flat. This year's release of real property tax assessments by the New York City Department of Finance (DOF) demonstrates that DOF is still not living up to its responsibility to tax in a fair and consistent manner. The recurrence of this problem for a second year underscores the desperate need for permanent reform of New York State's real property tax law.

DOF does not seem to have a reasonable, transparent, predictable method of assessing real property values for co-ops and condos. Last year, after Council Member Mark Weprin and his colleagues in the City Council Co-op

Condo Caucus joined with community and co-op leaders to protest the outrageous tax hikes, DOF agreed to cap the increases. Now, this year's assessments are almost as objectionable and unfounded as last year's. The housing market is still weak and home prices are steady at best. Unfortunately, the law does not permit DOF to assess co-ops in a predictable manner, as it does for single-family homes and rental buildings. Instead, DOF values co-ops by comparing them to rentals, a process that is exacerbated when DOF's computer system selects inappropriate comparables, as happened in some cases last year. Following the 2011 fiasco surrounding this issue, Council Member Weprin is working to create a plan to submit to the New York State Legislature to fix the co-op and condo real property tax system once and for all. Council Member Weprin continues to lead the fight for a change in law.

TEACHING RESPECT FOR ALL



Council Member Mark Weprin (right) joins Middle School 74Q Principal Anthony Armstrong (center), who received a Respect for All award from Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott (left).

Council Member Mark Weprin joined Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott to honor Middle School 74Q and Public School 186Q with Respect for All awards at the Third Annual Respect for All Week kickoff. Middle School 74Q in Oakland Gardens and Public School 186Q in Bellerose received the awards for implementing school programs that foster inclusive learning environments. City schools participated in the Third Annual Respect for All Week to embrace diversity and prevent bullying. Council Member Mark Weprin is a champion of efforts to combat bullying and harassment; last June, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed into law an anti-cyberbullying bill sponsored by Council Members Mark Weprin and Lewis A. Fidler.

KNICKS LEGEND JOHN STARKS VISITS FLORAL PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

The New York Knicks and Council Member Weprin organized a Basketball Clinic for students at Irwin Altman Middle School 172Q in Floral Park, Queens. Council Member Weprin joined Knicks legend John Starks and members of the Knicks Field Marketing Department for an instructional clinic that teaches basic basketball fundamentals. The interactive program promotes self-esteem and emphasizes the importance of healthy living and proper nutrition, which are especially critical at a time when childhood obesity has become so prevalent. Council Member Mark Weprin has long supported extracurricular activities that enhance education and allow students to learn important social skills.



ALLEY POND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER



Council Member Mark Weprin presented awards at the 33rd Annual Arline Thomas Urban Bird Literary and Arts Contest Ceremony at Alley Pond Environmental Center (APEC) in Douglaston, Queens. Children who showed extraordinary talent and an in-depth understanding of urban birds received recognition. This year's contests were art projects and literary works focusing on the bluebird, the official bird of New York State. Arline Thomas was a Queens native who dedicated her life to caring for sick and injured urban birds.

ADVOCATING FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED



YAI Network's center in Bayside, Queens hosted Council Member Mark Weprin for a visit; the center provides programs specializing in treating people with developmental disabilities, such as autism, and aiding them in becoming independent, valued members of the community. YAI's Day Habilitation program teams up with parents, businesses, and community members to help clients gain independence through volunteerism. Council Member Mark Weprin received the YAI Network Social Responsibility Award this year.

BICYCLE SHARING COMING TO NYC



Citi Bike, an exciting new way for New Yorkers to get around, is scheduled to launch this summer. Citi Bike is a self-service system that provides members with easy access to a network of thousands of bicycles. You can pick up a bicycle, ride, and then return it to any of the hundreds of stations to be located throughout the city.

Citi Bike will consist of 600 stations with 10,000 bicycles in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Western Queens. It will be privately sponsored, privately launched and privately operated, with no public funding.

More than half of all trips New Yorkers make are less than two miles. Bicycle sharing will make these trips cheap, easy, efficient and fast. The program also leverages the city's mass transit system, extending the reach of transit into areas that are not easily accessed.

MEALS ON WHEELS SERVES LOCAL SENIORS



Council Member Mark Weprin (left), with Rachel Sherrow of Meals On Wheels (right), delivers a meal to a Hollis Hills resident.

Council Member Mark Weprin joined Meals On Wheels to deliver meals to seniors in Queens. In the Eastern Queens district that Council Member Weprin represents, there is a significant senior population and programs like Meals On Wheels aid those with limited mobility who might otherwise face the threat of hunger. Meals on Wheels provides more than one million meals to seniors each day.

MARK WEPRIN HOSTS ANNUAL COUNCIL MEMBER FOR A DAY



Council Member Mark Weprin relinquished his Council seat for a day to Max Gallagher, a seventh grader at Public School 178Q, who won Council Member Weprin's annual essay contest. Max Gallagher of Holliswood, Queens, experienced what it is like to be Council Member for a day after Council Member Weprin chose his essay as the best among hundreds of entries. The essay question this year was "What do you love about New York City?"

Council Member for a Day Gallagher took a tour of the newly renovated City Hall, attended press conferences, participated in meetings, interacted with elected officials and took part in the Stated Meeting.

FREE MOVIES IN CUNNINGHAM PARK

COUNCIL MEMBER MARK WEPRIN and FRIENDS OF CUNNINGHAM PARK announce **five free movies (with free popcorn) in Cunningham Park this summer:**

- * August 2 - Three Musketeers
- * August 9 - The Help
- * August 16 - Captain America
- * August 23 - Happy Feet Two
- * August 27 - Close Encounters of the Third Kind



Each film starts at 8 PM. The movies will take place near the bocce courts. Enter the park through the parking lot on Union Turnpike at 196th Place and bring lawn chairs.

