

## Assemblyman

# Jeffrey Dinowitz

### Reports to the People of the 81<sup>st</sup> Assembly District

FALL 2016

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*Serving the communities of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield and Woodlawn*

Dear Neighbor:


As election season comes upon us, anyone who is eligible to vote, but is not registered, should do so as soon as possible. The deadline to register to vote for the November 8th Presidential Election is October 14th. You can get a form from my office at (718) 796-5345, from the Bronx Board of Elections at (718) 299-9017, or online at <http://www.elections.ny.gov/>.

While much attention is being paid to the national elections, we should not lose sight of what is going on locally in our community. I would like to praise the City Administration and the NYPD for their hard work as the crime rate continues to decrease. The unemployment rate in the Bronx is the lowest in many years. And for the second year in a row, the New York City Rent Guidelines Board established a 0% increase on one-year lease renewals in rent regulated apartments.

Though there is much good news, there is also no question that we have much more to do. The overcrowding of our classrooms, often caused by the actions of bureaucrats running our schools for example, is a very serious issue, and I have worked with many dedicated community members who are committed to fighting for our schools and our children. Additionally, although we accomplished many great things during this year's legislative session, there is much more to be done, not the least of which is meaningful ethics reform.

While my office has been extremely busy this summer, I know that as the summer ends and the new school year begins, things will be even busier. Please feel free to contact my office if there are any issues or constituent matters we can be helpful with. Have a great rest-of-the-summer.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey Dinowitz  
Member of Assembly

## Assemblyman Dinowitz and Assembly Speaker Heastie Jointly Acquire \$1 Million for the Wakefield Playground

Earlier this summer I was very proud to announce that by working with New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Council Member Andrew Cohen, we were able to allocate \$1.2 million in public funds to modernize the Wakefield Playground. The announcement was made with an excited group of young students from P.S. 16, the Wakefield School, which is adjacent to the playground. Together, Speaker Heastie and I acquired \$1 million for the project from the state budget, while Council Member Cohen secured the remaining \$200,000 from the City of New York. The NYC Parks Department plans on using the \$1.2 million to reconstruct the children's playground area including the jungle gym, swing set, and spray shower.

The renovated Wakefield playground will be a safe and entertaining place for our children to play in the heart of their own neighborhood. Investing in Bronx parks is critical as playgrounds like this one serve a great need in our community. I'm very proud that Speaker Heastie, Council Member Cohen and I were able to come together to make this significant improvement to the Wakefield neighborhood. When elected officials are able to work together with the communities they represent, great things happen and this project certainly reflects that.



Assemblyman Dinowitz and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie are pictured presenting their \$1 million check with Community Board 12 District Manager George Torres, Wakefield Taxpayers President Virginia Sanders, P.S. 16 Principal Yvonne Williams, Council Member Cohen, Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa and a number of children from P.S. 16.



Assemblyman Dinowitz was honored to join United States Supreme Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Sonia Manzano from Sesame Street, Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, among others in support of the Bronx Children's Museum's "Dream Big! Day."



## Assemblyman Dinowitz and other Local Leaders Allocate \$2 Million for New Van Cortlandt Library

The value of the New York Public Library System is immeasurable, which is why I am thrilled to announce that I have secured \$500,000 in capital funding to help create a new home for the Van Cortlandt Library at 3882 Cannon Place. Council Member Andrew Cohen, Senator Jeff Klein, and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. also contributed \$500,000 each, providing a total of \$2 million to bring a brand new library facility, in addition to countless new books and literary treasures, to the Van Cortlandt Village community. Libraries offer critical services such as internet access, job and technology training, English language classes, and countless other programs that enrich the lives of the communities they serve, while offering children a place to continue their education outside of

the classroom. I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to secure this money so that the Van Cortlandt Library can have a new and permanent home to continue providing free education to the community. The limitations of the current single-room facility make it very difficult for there to be dedicated adult, teen, or children's programming. The proposed new location is just three blocks from the existing branch, and at 5,847 square feet, it is more than double the size of the existing branch. In addition, the available outdoor space at the new locations offers a great opportunity to keep children and young readers engaged with outdoor programming, especially during the summer.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Secures Grants for Local Schools



*Assemblyman Dinowitz proudly presented the check for half a million dollars to Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy Principal Lori O'Mara, to be used to purchase interactive Smartboards.*

### Assemblyman Dinowitz Acquires \$500,000 for Technology Upgrades at Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy

The \$500,000 in capital funds I secured are to be used for in-classroom Smartboards, which are interactive, computerized whiteboards that utilize touch screen technology. Smartboards are an innovative way to upgrade public schools because they enable students to engage in classroom activities and lessons in a highly immersive way. The addition of this technology to RKA also ensures that teachers have the best technology available to facilitate student learning.

Smartboards are a great way to bring our schools into the twenty-first century and make sure that our students have access to the best resources possible. It is critical that as technology advances, our schools continuously improve to match those advancements; I am very excited to see this funding go to good use in the near future. Exposing students to this technology will help prepare them for higher education learning, while also giving them crucial experience with technology used in today's workforce.

### Assemblyman Dinowitz Funds P.S. 7 playground improvements

I was able to secure a \$125,000 capital grant to modernize and improve the playground at P.S. 7, the Milton Fein School in Kingsbridge. Every year P.S. 7 is exceedingly generous when it comes time for my office's Annual Holiday Canned Food Drive, and I am pleased to give back to this incredible student body. I cannot overstate the importance I place on fostering the construction and renovation of playgrounds. Ensuring that our children have a safe place to laugh, learn, and grow with each other within the comfort of their own neighborhood means that our community will continue to prosper. I look forward to seeing this project completed in the near future.

*Assemblyman Dinowitz presented the check for \$125,000 to P.S. 7 Principal Frank Patterson, to help repair and improve the school's playground.*



*Assemblyman Dinowitz and Congressman Eliot Engel joined the local neighborhood Boy Scout troop on Memorial Day in Woodlawn to honor those who have served our country.*

## Assemblyman Dinowitz, Council Member Cohen, the FDNY, and the American Red Cross Sponsor Second Successful Smoke Detector Giveaway

Earlier this Spring, I partnered with Council Member Cohen, the FDNY, and the American Red Cross to sponsor Free Smoke Detector Giveaways to the community. Following the success of the first giveaway at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center, we sponsored a second at the RAIN Nereid Senior Center in Wakefield. The event was another huge success with over 140 people showing up for a free smoke detector and installation appointment by the FDNY. Both Free Smoke Detector Giveaways were successful and I hope to continue these events in the future.



## Assemblyman Dinowitz Announces End of Legislative Session Victories

This June, I was pleased to announce several legislative victories at the conclusion of the 2016 Legislative session. While it is clear that there is much unfinished business, including some much needed ethics reform, we were able to get much done this session. I'm especially proud of the passage of several of my own bills, including:

- **Legislature Passes Dinowitz Law Protecting Consumers from Gift Card Fees (A. 7610)** A bill I authored protecting consumers from fees being assessed on gift cards and certificates has passed unanimously in both houses of the State Legislature. Too often have consumers either purchased or been given a gift card, only to later find out that there is little to no money left to spend due to exorbitant fees assessed on the card because of inactivity. Businesses selling gift cards have already made the profit of selling it, so there is no reason that a consumer should be penalized with fees for not using it within a specific time frame. Additionally, the legislation would codify in to state law an existing federal regulation that restricts the expiration date on gift cards to no sooner than five years from the date of issuance.
- **Governor Signs Life-Saving Dinowitz Legislation Expanding Paid Leave for Cancer Screenings (A. 409B)** Every year nearly 15,000 men in New York State are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and almost 1,700 die from the disease. Previously, public employees outside of the city of New York were entitled to up to four hours of paid leave per year for prostate cancer screening; this new law very simply puts New York City employees on an equal basis with New York State employees, and has the potential to save thousands of lives in the years to come. Though there is much we don't know about cancer, one of the few things the medical community is absolutely certain of, is that early detection yields more positive treatment results. It is my hope that this bill will foster greater accessibility to prostate screenings for city employees.



*Assemblyman Dinowitz and State Senator Jeff Klein welcome the 4th grade from P.S. 81 to Albany. They are pictured here with the students and teachers of one of P.S. 81 great 4th grade classes.*

## Assemblyman Dinowitz, Senator Klein, Council Member Cohen Bring E-Waste Recycling to the Northwest Bronx

Earlier this summer, my colleagues and I were joined by the Lower East Side Ecology Center and Tekserve, in hosting an electronic waste recycling event at the Spuyten Duyvil Public Library. Over one hundred Northwest Bronx community members came out to go green and recycle any and all of their unwanted electronics. Residents disposed of items such as working and non-working computers, monitors, scanners, keyboards, computer accessories, televisions, video cassette recorders, and phones. Recycling is a critical part of protecting our environment and while the e-waste recycling law is very beneficial for our city, it can be a burden for some to find a place to recycle their e-waste. I'm especially proud of how positively the community responded – it's clear that there is no shortage of environmental stewardship in this great community.

## NYC Department of Transportation Approves Much Needed Traffic Lights on Broadway and in Kingsbridge Heights

In an effort to create a safer Broadway corridor, I, along with Council Member Andrew Cohen and Senator Jeff Klein, formally requested that the City Department of Transportation (DOT) add traffic control measures on the Broadway corridor along Van Cortlandt Park between West 242nd Street and West 251st Street. I am proud to announce that after conducting a traffic study, the DOT has approved the installation of two new traffic signals in the area! The first signal will be located at the entrance to the Van Cortlandt Park House Museum/Nature Center opposite 6035 Broadway, while the second will be placed at the entrance to Van Cortlandt Park opposite 6087 Broadway.

These new traffic signals will significantly improve traffic safety along the Broadway corridor and Van Cortlandt Park. The stretch of road that was of particular concern contains a lengthy open stretch

of the park that many of you, as community residents, use to enter and exit the park, as well as the terminus of the 1 Train at 242nd Street, making it a highly trafficked and dangerous roadway for pedestrians. I am pleased I was able to work with my colleagues to make our community safer by calling for the installation of these traffic signals, and I am pleased the DOT listened to our concerns. I look forward to the work being completed this Fall.

Elsewhere in my district, I am also pleased to announce that another traffic signal has been approved for the intersection of West 197th Street and Reservoir Avenue in the Kingsbridge Heights community. The work is tentatively scheduled to be completed by the end of next Spring, and like the Broadway traffic signals, will make that community safer for pedestrians and motorists alike.

### **REMINDER:** The Rent Freeze Program, formerly known as the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), Has Expanded

If you qualify, your monthly rent amount will be frozen, and the City of New York will give your landlord a property tax credit equal to the amount of your increase. In 2014, the New York State legislature expanded the SCRIE income eligibility from \$29,000 to \$50,000 a year. If you would like more information or assistance filing an initial application, please feel free to stop by my office. To be eligible you must be at least 62 years of age, your income must not exceed \$50,000, and your annual rent must be greater than one third of your annual income.



*Assemblyman Dinowitz was honored to meet members of the Tuskegee Airmen in Albany as they were recognized for their bravery and service to our country. Pictured are William J. Johnson of Glen Cove, Audley Coulthurst of Harlem, Wilford R. DeFour of Harlem, and Herbert C. Thorpe of Brooklyn. Not present that day was long term Riverdale resident and Tuskegee Airman, Roscoe C. Brown Jr., who sadly passed away recently.*



## Assemblyman Dinowitz's Annual Concert Series Swings into Summer and Rocks the Bronx

Over the summer, the Bronx Council on the Arts and I welcomed hundreds of members of the community to a series of eight free concerts in the Northwest Bronx. The concerts ranged from jazz musicians in the Amalgamated Train Park, to Gene DiNapoli's Variety All-Star Show at the Riverdale YM-YWHA, and even a fantastic Beatles tribute band in Henry Hudson Park. There is no better way to spend a beautiful summer evening with friends and family than by listening to talented musicians play. Hundreds of community members attend these concerts, which are excellent opportunities for people of all ages to relax and enjoy quality music together. Every year I am proud to partner with the Bronx Council on the Arts to sponsor this series of free concerts.



Assemblyman Dinowitz's annual summer concert series, in partnership with the Bronx Council on the Arts, opened the season with Gene DiNapoli and his Variety All-Star Show at the Riverdale YMHA.

## 2016 ELECTIONS

2016 is a presidential election year – here are the dates you need to know as election season comes upon us:

- **September 13, 2016** is the State and Local Primary (in areas where there are contested races).
- **October 14, 2016** is the last day to register for the 2016 General Election.
- **November 8, 2016** is the General Election.

To register to vote, or for more information, visit <http://www.elections.ny.gov/> or call **1-800-FOR-VOTE (1-800-367-8683)**.



Later in the Summer Concert Series, Assemblyman Dinowitz brought a rousing recreation of the Beatles in their "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" costumes to Henry Hudson Park. The band is shown here with Gene DiNapoli, Eric Dinowitz, and Assemblyman Dinowitz.

## Free Notary Service

Our office provides free notary service during regular office hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please bring two forms of identification, at least one with your photo and signature, if you would like your signature notarized.



Assemblyman Dinowitz Participated in this year's National Night Out with 50th Precinct Deputy Inspector O'Toole.

## Assemblyman Dinowitz Sponsors

### THREE FLU SHOT EVENTS:

**OCTOBER 6<sup>TH</sup> @ 10 A.M. • Vladeck Hall**

**OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup> @ 10 A.M. • St. Gabriel's Rectory**

**OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup> @ 10 A.M. • Riverdale YM-YWHA**

As the dates and times are tentative, community members should call Assemblyman Dinowitz's office at (718) 796-5345 to make an appointment before the date of the event. Additionally, those in attendance should bring a copy of their insurance information.