



# SHUT DOWN

Due to the Resorts World Casino construction, the Aqueduct Flea Market, a staple in the Southeast Queens community, will shut down at the end of this month with no plan in place for its vendors to relocate.

By Domenick Rafter...Page 3



PRESS Photo by Ira Cohen

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# Creating Hope Out Of A Tragic Death

BY JASON BANREY

Heartbreaking situations can often cast a dark shadow over the communities where they occur. On Oct 15, after tragedy struck home, the loved ones of one slain victim decided to cast aside the murky veil that has engulfed the Fresh Meadows community.

Residents of Pomonok Houses in South Flushing have recently become no stranger to gun violence and are fed up with seeing the youth of their neighborhood lethally settle scores with firearms.

In an effort to take a stand against violence in their area, Crystal McMoore, a friend, and Andrea McGowan, mother

of recently slain Laseam Hogan, have begun the process of creating a foundation that they hope will turn a vicious cycle into a future revival for generations to come.

"We need to grab a hold of our kids before the rage does," said McMoore. "Little boys with anger turn in the men with rage, and nobody can control a man with rage."

In an effort to unite the housing community and residents of surrounding areas, McMoore and McGowan quickly put together a rally to let potential violent offenders know "we're not going to take it anymore."

In the end, more than 175 people at-

tended the Saturday afternoon March Off The Madness rally. Put together in only a week through the use of social network Web sites such as Facebook and Craigslist, McMoore noticed the potential to create a catalyst for change within the community that was suffering.

The crowd of chanting activists was the exact audience for the women to announce the creation of their foundation, Let's All Succeed Empower And Motivate (LASEAM), in front of locals that are also afflicted by the same violence that took Hogan at the young age of 27.

Getting not only residents of the community to be a part of the change, McMoore is soliciting local businesses to donate to her cause, and seeks to develop a youth center that will provide activities. Within the facility, youth would be able to congregate as opposed to "hanging out in the court yard at all times of the day," McMoore said.

During the rally, McMoore asked local businesses to donate towards their cause and was met with mixed reactions. Some stores willingly donated, others turned her away.

Before Hogan was shot, an incident occurred at the Subway sandwich shop across the street from the where the crime took place.

McMoore's philosophy of community support is one she believes area stores also need to grasp.

"Does there have to be gunfire in [their] stores for them to realize this is happening to [them] too," McMoore asked.

She acknowledges the saying, "It



Laseam Hogan was killed Oct. 15, and his family is trying to get the community to learn from his lesson.

takes a village to raise a child," and believes this the essence of creating a foundation to bring the community together again.

Although McMoore said her recent activism has been criticized, with some saying "it's a waste of time," she is going to continue keeping the faith because "the kids are taking the hit during these tough times."

McMoore is reaching out to city councilmen and the Mayor's office for guidance in forming her start-up foundation. She is also creating an itinerary for 2011 that she hopes will be packed with events to keep the youth engaged and off the streets.

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## Aqueduct Flea Market Given Notice To Leave

BY DOMENICK RAFTER

The Aqueduct Flea Market, which has been a staple in the north parking lot of Aqueduct Racetrack for decades, will shut down after the holiday season because of construction of the new Resorts World New York casino, according to a statement released by Resorts World New York on Nov. 22.

"Having heard from the vendors that they wanted an answer quickly in order to make their future plans, Resorts World New York expedited its review process," the statement read. "Since the Aqueduct facility will be a construction site for several months, the Division of the Lottery determined that the continued presence of the flea market would raise safety concerns, in addition to being incompatible with the future use of the property."

"As a result, we have informed the Aqueduct flea market operator, Plain & Fancy Shows, Inc., that the contract permitting the operation of a flea market at Aqueduct will not be renewed after the

contract's Dec. 21, 2010 expiration date, although the market will be allowed to operate through the holidays, until Dec. 31, 2010," the statement continued.

Resorts World said any future retail activity on the site would fall under the purview of the Division of the Lottery, which would need to approve and regulate any further retail activity on the site.

Borough President Helen Marshall has been involved in finding an alternate site for the vendors, when their future was in doubt in recent months. Dan Andrews, spokesman for the borough president, said sites such as Belmont Racetrack and Citi Field were being considered, but in light of Monday's statement, finding an alternate site, Andrews said, would be a "heavy lift."

"We encourage [the vendors] to reach out to the Dept. of Parks and see if they can help locate a site," he said.

Andrews said Marshall wanted the Division of the Lottery to explain its reasons in writing.

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## Cleanup Renews Unsightly Trestle

BY SASHA AUSTRIE

With the Long Island Railroad roaring above, a group of nonviolent offenders sentenced to community service meticulously added a new coat of paint to the underpass.

"Graffiti as we know it is a scourge on any neighborhood and a scourge on the Long Island Railroad property here," said Joe Calderon, a LIRR spokesman.

The LIRR is partnering with the NYC Community Cleanup organization, which targets litter and vandalism, with nonviolent offenders performing community service. The offenders are aged 16 and up. According to Alicia McFarlane, deputy district attorney director of alternative sentencing, the offenders have committed petty larceny and in some cases graffiti.

The trestle at 195th Street and 99th Avenue received a facelift on Tuesday from 25 people sentenced to community service.

At weeks' end, NYC Community Cleanup's Queens crew transformed 11 sites, mostly in Jamaica. Calderon said 200 cubic yards of trash has been cleaned

from LIRR property.

"What you see today is part of a larger effort," Calderon said. "We are committed to being good neighbors."

Benjamin Smith, NYC Community Cleanup deputy director, said since last year the organization picked up 15,000 bags of trash from 172 locations. Though the organization deals mainly in community cleanup, nonprofits such as the Food Bank of New York and Material for the Arts has benefited from NYC Community Cleanup's services.

Carlton Parks, a neighbor to the graffiti-covered trestle, said it has been a disfigured dumping ground for a decade. Parks, a sanitation worker, said he has cleaned the site on his lunch breaks.

"It means at least they are looking at it, monitoring it," he said of the new coat of paint. "It means that they care."

Though he is enthused about the strides made to clean up the graffiti, Parks said he wants a deterrent. He suggested dummy cameras and signs warning dumpers.

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PHOTO BY IRA COHEN

The Aqueduct Flea Market, a staple in South Queens, whose days are numbered.