

Neighborhood News

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Schoolyard Summer

The city will open 69 public school playgrounds for unrestricted use this summer, including the P.S. 112 playground on Crescent Street in Dutch Kills.

The Long Island City playground is one of several Queens school sites that will be opened to the public from July 1 through Labor Day for daytime, evening and weekend activities, Parks Department officials said.

Opening the schoolyards to the communities for "Open Space" is part of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's recently announced environmental initiative. Bloomberg has allocated \$96 million to the city Parks Department for the project, said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe.

LaGCC Offers Job Readiness Program

Officials at LaGuardia Community College are offering a free six-week job readiness and computer literacy program for divorced, separated or widowed homemakers or single parents who are interested in entering the workforce.

The program is also available to the unemployed, to those with a disabled spouse, or to anyone who has experienced a loss of family income and is seeking employment.

Classes are scheduled Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on

Friday from 9 a.m. to noon at LaGuardia Community College, at 31-10 Thomson Ave., Long Island City.

All those attending classes under the LaGCC Home to Work Center (HWC) for Displaced Homeowners will receive training in job readiness workshops and English as a second language, along with computer and vocational training that will prepare them to enter the workforce.

HWC offers courses in computer literacy, sales, food service and customer service, along with training leading to certification as a pharmacy technician or nurse's aide.

The center also offers individual and group career counseling, support and referral services, job search and job placement services.

For more information call the college at 718-482-5166.

Peralta Targets Gang Violence

Queens Assemblymember Jose Peralta last week announced that he has introduced legislation designed to tackle gang violence in New York City. Three bills recently introduced in the Assembly by the Corona lawmaker would bolster existing laws by mandating punishment for gang membership.

Peralta said the legislation would "create a better and easier fight against gangs".

Speaking outside the High School for

Arts and Business in Corona, Peralta said something must be done to crack down on gang membership, "or we end up with our children dead, or close to it".

The first bill introduced by Peralta calls for 75 percent of proceeds seized through gang raids to be redirected from the Police Department to local school districts to fund after-school programs.

The second bill would grant school districts the right to stop students from wearing gang "colors", gang-related apparel, markings or symbols inside school buildings.

The third bill would provide law enforcement with a new set of tools to fight gangs and would call for closure of all locations used by gangs for meetings.

Empire State Baseball Team Tryouts

Queens high school students who would like to compete with pitchers and catchers are invited to test their skills for a spot on the 2007 Empire State Baseball Team.

Tryouts for current high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors will take place at 5 p.m. on June 12, 13, 19 and 20 at the Grant Street Campus H.S. at 850 Grant St., Brooklyn.

The Empire Games, dubbed the "largest multi-sport event for amateur athletes in the nation", will take place from July 25 through 29 at a location in Westchester County.

The Empire team will be competing for gold, silver and bronze medals against

players from five other New York State regions.

Players interested in trying out for the state games should contact Tommy Torres at 718-812-0515 for additional information. Applications for the Empire State Games can be downloaded at www.empirestategames.org.

Anyone vying for a spot on the 2007 team must bring a completed application to the Brooklyn tryouts.

City Pulls Plug On Late-Night Swims


A plan that would have allowed city beaches and pools to remain open past 6 p.m. is going down the drain, for this summer, at least.

Citing a lack of lifeguards, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe last week said, "I suspect we won't have anything new for this season."

Benepe, who was questioned on the issue while testifying during a City Council budget hearing, said extending hours is still being discussed.

Keeping pools and beaches open in the evening and after Labor Day hinges on the availability of lifeguards, Benepe said. Many city lifeguards are unavailable to work extended hours and many are college students who must return to classes in late August, thwarting plans to keep beaches open past Labor Day. "So it may just be a problem of having enough bodies available to cover all locations," Benepe added.

Benepe said the Parks Department would continue to explore the plan.



Your "Power Problems?" booklet is in the mail.

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