

Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr.
Evander Childs High School
800 E. Gun Hill Road
12 PM, Thursday, February 26, 2004

Good afternoon friends and neighbors. It's hard to believe that my third State of the Borough Address has come so quickly. I want to recognize my colleagues in government and my staff for working with me to lead this great borough. As you know I stand on the very broad shoulders of men and women who have dedicated their lives to making this a place of opportunity for everyone.

I asked you to come here today because this school has a rich history of graduates who have gone on to greatness and I am committed to ensuring that we continue that tradition. Last year I served as Principal for a Day here. I was here to break ground for a new sports field and track and visited on several occasions to talk to parents, students and teachers.

I'm glad to welcome all of you to Evander Childs High School, named in honor of a great educator and considered one of the best school principals in our City's history. The new Evander houses three distinct schools -- The School of Aeronautics, which offers a curriculum in aviation and aerospace, the School of Contemporary Arts... this is a program that prepares students in the arts, using cutting-edge art forms and technology, and the Academy of Travel and Tourism, this school prepares students in all aspects of travel, tourism and hospitality careers.

Over the past few years, students have made some extraordinary accomplishments at Evander. They've returned to the Con Edison Science Bowl as defending champions last year. Evander Child's Robotics Team has participated in the F.I.R.S.T. Robotics Competition for the last five years and has won the Judges Award in 2000 and 2001, the Spirit Award in 2002 and made the quarterfinals in 2003. Please recognize the Robotics Team from Evander Childs High School.

Evander has had its share of successful graduates. One of the century's best-known comedians, Red Buttons, once walked these halls. Harry Helmsley, a successful New York real estate entrepreneur also bopped around these hallways. Beatrice and Barney Tobay, who provided the New Yorker magazine with artwork for over 50 years, met as classmates here and later married. Hey, you never know!

I thought I could easily start today's address by giving you a rundown of the work we're doing in education, the environment, housing and community development, infrastructure, commercial and retail development, healthcare, public safety and every other issue we tackle every day. As I was preparing for this address though, I thought it would be best if we first address the economic conditions we are facing at the national, state and local levels, and what this means for people in the Bronx who are simply trying to take care of themselves and their families.

In my newly elected role as Vice President of the County Executives of America I am seriously trying to become a good student of our economy. According to many economists the recession ended three years ago. Meanwhile we have seen the loss of 2-million, three hundred thousand jobs in that period. President Bush said that, within 7 months of his tax cut, 2,2 million jobs would be created in 2003, and that by the end of 2004, this year, we'd have 5.5 million new jobs. In fact, only 300,000 jobs have been created. Ladies and gentleman, that means he owes us 5,200,000 jobs. Where are they? At this rate President Bush is on track to have the worse job creation record of any president since Herbert Hoover in the Great Depression.

The Bush job creation record is so bad that his chief economist, Gregory Mankiw, recently argued that and I quote "Making a Big Mac is a manufacturing job." Talk about fuzzy math. This weak attempt at humor is not funny. And it's certainly not funny to the people who are seriously struggling to create jobs for unemployed people here in the Bronx and across the country.

Unfortunately, even though I like him as an individual, our Governor, George Pataki, has a similar record. Since 2001 New York State has lost over 342,000 jobs. And, presently, New York ranks 41st out of the 50 states in job growth. In fact, last week when Senator Hillary Clinton and I met with a group of upstate farmers and growers to talk about how they can get their New York State farm products to the Hunts Point Market, they said that the deep economic crisis that exists in upstate New York is because of a lack of serious and aggressive leadership on the part of Albany. They said there is no plan. They argue there is no leadership.

In New York City and the Bronx conditions are even more desperate. As of last December the City's unemployment rate was 7.8%, almost 2% higher than the national average. In the past year, the City has lost 24,200 jobs. Sadly, New York City has fewer jobs today than it did in 1969. If we are to be the City of opportunity we've been for so many generations, we cannot remain on this path. This will require a different course from Washington, Albany and City Hall.

In The Bronx, too many are without work and struggling to get by. Almost one in five Bronx households has lost a job in the last year. More than one in ten Bronx residents (that's five percent higher than the national average) are unemployed and trying to live on pay that's so paltry that the dark cloud of family disaster hangs over them day in and day out.

The average income of a Bronx resident is under \$25,000 and those who have a job wonder how long it will last. A third of those unemployed in the Bronx are single mothers that held jobs without adequate leave policies or health benefits. They report the reason they lost their jobs is because of the need to care for a family member.

My friends, young Bronxites who are still in high school or about to graduate from college, wonder what will be their lot when they graduate. An astounding one-third of the people of the Bronx fall under the national poverty level, yet the level of people receiving

food stamp assistance is a mere one-fifth of the national average. So despite Wall Street indicators and experts suggesting growth, three-fourths of Bronx residents say they feel the economy is getting worse.

In 2002, shortly before Thanksgiving, Joseph Sulle, a Bronx resident, lost his job as a security supervisor. Joe Sulle has a degree in industrial engineering. Mr. Sulle's wife was unable to work due to a back injury. Despite help from the Community Service Society they fell deeper and deeper into debt until they were reduced to living in their car. Unfortunately, this story has become more common in our City. Joe Sulle's story is the human face of a Bronx unemployment rate that went from 7.2% in 2001 to 10.3% in 2004. Joe Sulle and his wife stand in the dark shadow of stock market corrections, corporate scandals, the effects of September 11th, and the hemorrhaging of resources from our local economies to wars in faraway lands. Today, there are more than 40,000 people in New York City who are homeless. Most of them are children. Something has to be done NOW.

My friends I still believe the best social program is a job!!!

So today we launch THE BRONX AT WORK. This is essentially a JOB CREATION/JOB CONNECTION initiative. The whole point is to attract new business investment to the Bronx and to get Bronx residents connected to jobs in the Bronx, the City and the Region. We will launch this website, WWW.THEBRONXATWORK.COM, by this summer. Here, Bronxites will access information about jobs in the region, and education and training programs. "The Bronx at Work" is an opportunity for Bronxites to effectively pursue employment. This campaign will not end until everyone who wants to work in the Bronx has a job!

I will now turn this talk to our efforts to create a healthy set of conditions so that we may fulfill our most pressing responsibility, to prepare people to meaningfully participate in this democracy and compete in this economy. As I have consistently suggested, the centerpiece of our efforts must be the neighborhood. Neighborhoods that provide safety and security; quality health care services; opportunities for businesses to grow; good housing; a safe and clean environment; and strong schools. You'll recall from last year's address that I used the framework of the Three E's – Education, the Environment and Economic Development. Education as the foundation for everything we do, because without a sound basic education we cannot have a fully engaged citizenry. The Environment, meaning the place where we live – quality of life in housing, parks, traffic, safety and security, health and wellness... And, Economic Development, which has to do ultimately with our prospects for sharing in prosperity – a good job and the ability to conduct business.

I will now share with you our progress in these three areas:

I said last year, we must commit ourselves to the education of the children of our Borough. This is the foundation for everything we accomplish and anything we hope to preserve in this borough and in this city. We must have a consensus on this. Education is

the only strategy to bring about a permanent reduction in crime. It is the best economic development strategy. And yes, it is even the foundation of our national security. It will protect and preserve our constitution and ensure our democratic society. Nothing less. There is nothing as important as securing the education of our children. In 2004 it will require facing our challenges and acting on what we know. It will take leadership.

Last year, I marched with City Council Member Robert Jackson and others in the last leg of their “Walk for Our Children” from New York City to Albany. I know that many wondered why we did it. And as our small group approached the Capital, I understood why my colleague had to make this journey. He knew that we could not study the issue into the reality of funding...that we must stand up and exercise leadership. So in 2004 he marched, we marched to Albany New York for equity. There are no less than three groups studying the issue of equity to determine what it means for New York City. We don't need the meetings. We need leadership...in Albany, in Washington and in City Hall.

We need to speak with one voice on this issue to tell the Governor that investing is not the same as gambling and we want investment in school operations and investment in building. On behalf of the children of our borough and City I stand with the Bronx legislators who are already on record and will launch an aggressive fight in this budget session, and we together call on Governor Pataki and the Legislature's leadership to give our children the education funds that rightfully should come to them.

And if you see the Mayor, please let him know that it takes more than policing the schools and creating an environment of detention to maintain our schools safe and to create an environment of learning for teachers and students. The City newspapers decry the violence in our schools, and parade the poor retention and graduation rates of our high schools. And while we too decry these statistics, we know that there is more to the story. A recent report issued by City Planning tells us that the Bronx high Schools hold another record... a record for utilization. Some of the same schools that reported increases in violent incidents or are extremely low-performing also are overcrowded: 145% in Walton HS, 148% at Roosevelt, 115% here at Evander, and 193% at Kennedy High School.

We don't need to study this issue. We need new buildings and we need them on line right now. So while we have your ear, Mr. Mayor, we need leases to bring the promise of your capital plan into fruition NOW. Our children have waited long enough. Four years for a high school student is an educational lifetime.

Leadership requires we use the tried and true solutions...like small schools. We are lucky in this Borough to have enlightened educational leaders – educators like our Regional Superintendents Laura Rodriguez and Irma Zardoya who with New Visions, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Open Society Institute and the Carnegie Foundation are at the forefront of the national movement to create small public high schools. There will be 30 new small high schools right here in the Bronx. But they are not doing this alone. Committees of parents, community based organizations, students, teachers, civic and business leaders are volunteering their time to create our new theme-based high schools,

which you heard about last year. I am honored to be in their company and would like to acknowledge their work on behalf of the future of this Borough. Would the new school committees please stand up...please give them a hand. What they are doing takes extraordinary commitment that must be matched by our state and City leaders.

I want to recognize three students in our public schools who demonstrate what leadership is.

Mark Banks, a senior at Morris High School is the first Bronx High School Student to be selected for the Students on Ice expedition in Antarctica. Medina Parrilla is not only our chess Champion, she ranks 2nd in the United States for girls in her age group and was invited to places as far away as international competitions in Greece. And David Mendez, whose dream is to design cars, rolled up his sleeves and gave up his free time and went to work on a 21st Century high School Committee to design his dream high school. They are already leaders, my friends, and they deserve our commitment and investment in education. Please give them an applause.

These and so many of our children excel because parents and significant adults in their lives take an interest in their future. One of the keys to making sure our children excel is parental involvement. I know this may sound a little controversial This doesn't mean that parents spend their time poking around the school trying to find a management issue at every turn or that they're part of a social club to while away their days...this means that they are meaningfully engaged in the substance of their child's education. So that significant parental involvement means that parents are made fully aware of the curriculum, the expectations and the milestones their child must pass as they make their way toward graduation. We will continue to distribute guides and manuals to help parents understand what it is their children should be doing at every stage of their development and what resources are available to them to make sure they're progressing. We will continue hosting Making the Grade; our all day conference for parents and students because each time we do it the audience grows.

The Bronx is home to a devastating digital divide that threatens to further isolate us from the economy. I have placed a priority on closing the digital divide for our schools – elementary schools and high schools. I'm proud of our investment of nearly \$3 million for technology projects that support the curriculum in the public schools. We have funded portable science labs and computer labs across this borough

We have worked with Teaching Matters, our partner with the Salvadori Center in the Bronx Academy for the Future to use the technology to improve instruction in literacy and social studies. We funded computer equipment for The Academy of Math, Science, and Technology, The Talented and Gifted Academy, as well as The University Collaborative, Arts& Media Academy

And, I am happy to announce that soon Cablevision will install high-speed Internet access in every single Bronx school. Evander will be one of the first schools to get the high-speed Internet access. I want to take this opportunity to thank Cablevision for

beginning the connection of every Bronx library and every Bronx Community Board Office. Thanks Brent Anderson of Cablevision for your partnership with the Bronx.

Let me close this section with a look at the institutions of higher learning in our borough. We are known as the borough of colleges and universities. The colleges in the Bronx deserve the best facilities and resources needed to obtain a first-class education for all its students. I would like to formally recognize all of the College Presidents from across the Borough. We certainly appreciate the strides they have made at their institutions. Over the next two years, as we roll out an economic development strategy for the Bronx, we need you at the table. Each of you are unique in your programs and offerings, and you have our support. But you know that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. So we need to work together.

I look forward to allocating \$2.4 million over the fiscal years of 2004 and 2005 for Bronx colleges. The funds will go to more classroom space, science lab equipment, and computer technology. These education initiatives will make it possible for Bronx students to acquire the education that they deserve. But imagine what we could do in economic development, education and environment if we worked together.

As I have described many times over, the concept of environment I subscribe to is broader than air and water quality or flora and fauna. I believe that the concept of environment should incorporate the whole human environment – the quality of life in the neighborhoods where we live.

A successful neighborhood needs to have an effective dialogue with local government. One of the ways, I feel that I can best directly reach my fellow Bronxites is through the use of Town Hall Meetings. Town Hall Meetings have been held since our Country's founding as a way of address the issues of the day...and I believe they still work today.

So, I set out to sponsor a series of town hall meetings. We held our first in June 2002, in the North East Bronx, that is, Community District 12. In January, I met with Community Board 9 in the East Bronx. The third was held in June 2003, for Community District 4, in the Highbridge, Melrose and the Civic Center Grand Concourse area. And just recently, we held a town hall meeting in Co-op City in Community District 10. And I'm planning many more...so stay tuned.

As an innovative way to reach everyone directly in their living rooms, we created the first ever monthly call-in TV shows, Ask the Borough President on News 12-the Bronx and in Spanish-we have Dialogo con El Presidente on Bronxnet. We have a team of people with me in the studio taking down complaints from callers and seeing that problems get solved. These meetings and TV shows give our community a chance to hold me accountable as borough president.

Also, to address concerns of the Northeast Bronx, we opened a satellite Office in Wakefield. If you need to address a concern, you can choose a location to visit at your convenience. The satellite office is located on White Plans Road in the Community Board

12 Office.

We also have improved accessibility on the Internet. I am proud to announce that, in collaboration with Con Edison and Bronxmall.com, we are the first Borough to have all its community boards on the Web. They are accessible through my website, available at Bronxbp.nyc.gov.

The foundation of all neighborhoods is built on law, order and civility. The issue of public safety is not a partisan issue, although many attempt to hijack it and identify it with the political right. We in the Bronx don't buy that nonsense. We know from our recent experience that the way this borough came back from decline and devastation is by good, hardworking men and women making it their business to insist on lawfulness and decency and demanding that government provide services to their neighborhoods.

A civil society relies on safety. After September 11th, our sense of safety was tested. In the Bronx we've always held to the idea that neighborhood safety is the basic building block for our society and the beat cop is what makes this work. I will continue to urge the administration to implement a community policing strategy that puts beat cops back in every single neighborhood.

I would like to recognize Police Officer Anthony Marks, a new member of the Target Team from the precinct. Last October, although he was off-duty, when he witnessed a shooting, Officer Marks jumped from his car to aid the victim and helped collar the bad guy. Officer Marks embodies the spirit of service and commitment to protecting the residents.

My friends and colleagues, in our tenure this generation will preside over the end of the stereotyped Bronx and the celebration of the Bronx we know and love. The public's perception has been based on salacious books and movies that depict our borough as the epicenter of urban blight. It no longer is. Homicides down are 20% - and down 73% from 1993. While crime has dramatically decreased, I have continued to push for police resources to be directed to the Bronx, and this month 192 new officers were deployed to Bronx precincts. Please help me recognize the great work that Chief Tom Purtell has been doing since he took the helm. This is the Bronx...a safer community. We must all work together to keep this trend going.

While we have made tremendous strides in reducing crime in many areas we still have not done enough to protect the safety of women against domestic violence. In the first nine months of 2003, 7 victims of domestic violence were murdered in the Bronx. In 2002 there were 16 homicides and 55, 726 reported domestic violence incidents in the Bronx. And that's just what's reported.

One of my first actions as Bronx Borough President was to apply for federal funds from the Office on Violence Against Women. In October of 2002, we secured nearly \$1,000,000 for two grants: The Safe Havens Supervised Visitation Program Grant- in partnership with the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services- and The Arrest

Reduction Project Grant- in partnership with the our District Attorney Robert Johnson and Sanctuary for Families.

These partners are now members of my Domestic Violence Advisory Council. Last year we held two major events to build awareness around this issue. During Bronx Week, we held the first annual Bronx DiVA SPA, where we converted Veteran's Memorial Hall at the Bronx County Courthouse into a fully operational spa for women and provided education on domestic violence.

And, in October, in partnership with NEWS 12 The Bronx, we produced Bronx DiVA Talk, a two-hour live talk and call-in show where we addressed domestic violence issues head on with a panel of experts. Please help me thank News 12 the Bronx.

In addition to the programmatic work being done in the Bronx, I have also dedicated funds from my own budget to combat domestic violence. I allocated \$1 million for the construction of a shelter named Bronx House, which will provide support services to victims and their families. Upon completion, the shelter will house up to seventy women and children.

This past summer during National Night Out, we coordinated a cellular phone donation drive. These phones were be reprogrammed by the Verizon Hopeline Project and later donated to the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services and Sanctuary for Families and the Violence Intervention Program for distribution to victims in the hopes that lives can be saved.

Last year, we also allocated \$750, 000 to renovate a former Bronx synagogue in the Norwood section of the Bronx into a children's center for victims of sexual and physical abuse. This center, originally funded by former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, will be an extension of the Child Protection Center at Montefiore Medical Center and will offer medical exams and counseling referrals to young victims of abuse in the hopes of breaking the cycle of violence at a young age.

In his proposed budget for the next fiscal year, the Mayor calls for cuts to senior services. He has proposed eliminating \$7.5 million in funding for senior programs for the five Borough Presidents - including funds for Bronx seniors- that come from the Department for the Aging. This is unacceptable. I will continue my fight for seniors- and includes the protection of Meals on Wheels programs - to ensure that we do not lose funding for important senior services in the Bronx.

My Office of Faith Based Initiatives and the Bronx Clergy Task Force have truly gone above and beyond by providing all manner of service and assistance to our community. For example, they worked to with the Convoy of Hope- a coalition of clergy- to provide more than 5,000 Bronx residents with health screenings, food and entertainment at Thanksgiving. Working with the police and the Bronx Chaplaincy Commission -which I created, they have implemented programs and initiatives to improve the quality of life for

all Bronxites. My Office of Faith Based Initiatives, Bronx Clergy Task Force and the Bronx Chaplaincy Commission have been helping chaplains around the borough to more effectively provide services to Bronx residents in distress. They have also organized forums on education and capacity building to help faith based community organizations with grant writing, filing for 501c3 status with the IRS, and accessing available grants. They have conducted a special prayer service to recognize the brave men and women serving in the armed forces.

At this point, I would like to recognize the Bronx army reservists from the 773rd transportation company, the first company from New York State to be deployed and returned home in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and of the Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would also like to remember Private First Class Luis Moreno, U.S. Army, who died as a result of injuries sustained while on active duty in Baghdad. I believe that he is the first Bronxite, to die in Iraq. Because of the efforts of Congressman Jose Serrano, he was awarded citizenship this past week one year after his death. Please observe a moment of silence in his memory.

Businesses and service providers must be safe in the Bronx as well. We will continue our aggressive efforts to protect small businesses and livery drivers who are there for us everyday.

This means giving them the tools they need to communicate distress and allow appropriate response by the police. Working with the Bodega and Deli Owners Association of America and the NYS Federation of Taxi Drivers we will continue to bring crime down in this area.

I am proud to say that for the first time in thirty years, until last month, we had a 12-month period without a single murder of a livery-cab driver.

The perception of safety and security is often as important as the reality. My friend, Freddie Ferrer, who shepherded this borough through a difficult time and helped bring it back, espoused the broken window theory. It went something like this: if a window breaks fix it...otherwise someone will come along and break the next one and a cycle of disregard will ensue. We know this to be true and so we have worked to clean up the Bronx. This means we step up our battle against graffiti and other forms of vandalism.

A clean neighborhood is usually a safe neighborhood. We will continue to fight for cleaner and safer neighborhoods...whether it's trash, air pollution, fire safety, policing or anything that impacts our environment. I have called on the NYPD Anti-Graffiti Task Force to increase their surveillance of the Bronx. This year we will launch the first Bronx Spring Cleaning. Last year, we held the Community Clean-up Day during Bronx Week and many Bronx residents helped clean up parks and empty lots. This year we'll go further. On May 1st every community board will help coordinate clean-up activities in their areas. The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce, several corporate sponsors, artists and a Bronx-based Public Relations firm have agreed to provide publicity for this event. Folks, we're in this together everyone must pitch in.

The perception of a community that allows certain types of activities to occur unchecked often leads to a proliferation of what I call the bottom feeders in our society. I'm speaking of the people who operate short stay motels with the full knowledge that their places are being used for criminal activity or attract criminal activity. I have launched a very aggressive campaign against these so-called hot sheet motels. Working with the Police, Fire, Buildings and Health Departments, the Bronx District Attorney, the courts, and community leaders, we closed the Alps Hotel on Boston Road, the Andrea Motel and the Holiday Hotel on I-95.

In the case of the Alps Hotel- unfortunately against my wishes and that of the community- it has reopened as a Howard Johnson's motel. I have made it clear to the owners and to the Cendant Corporation that we will continue to aggressively monitor them and will shut them down again if they break the law. We are not kidding...we will shut them down. In the case of the Andrea and the Holiday, we have engaged with the owners in a constructive discussion about building a legitimate first class hotel and conference center. So stay tuned.

Public safety also means fire protection. Last year I provided \$200,000 for capital projects in our firehouses. The firefighters of the Bronx are the best. Please help me say thank you to the Fire Department Borough Commander Joseph Callan.

It is important that we build character in our young people by filling their lives with positive challenges. After many years of planning, we will open The West Bronx Unit of the Kips Bay Boys and Girls' Club at the former Hebrew Institute of University Heights on University Ave. I am happy to announce that construction will begin this spring. I would like to thank Housing Authority Chairman Tino Hernandez, Danny Quintero of Kips Bay Boys and Girls' Club, and Council Member Maria Baez for their support in the development of this project. This is a model for similar projects in the northeast Bronx and the west Bronx.

In the last two fiscal years, I provided \$4 million for youth and community centers. I also allocated \$1.2 million in program grants for youth services.

Last year, I announced the creation of Bronx Kids, Inc., a private foundation that would raise funds to support sports, arts and cultural activities, weekend and summer camp and other life enhancing activities for Bronx children. Last year, the NY Yankees and an anonymous donor made generous commitments to support Bronx Kids. Since then we've expanded the board of directors, brought on a staff person and will be stepping up our fundraising efforts.

I would like you to acknowledge the board members and the new staff member of Bronx Kids, Ruben Quiles. Thanks for your dedication and commitment to our children.

Last year, through Bronx Kids, we were able to send 200 kids from 10 Bronx

organizations to summer camp for a week. I can still remember the wonder on their faces when I swam with them at the lake at the Clearpool Education Center in Carmel, NY. Today, I am glad to announce that this summer, through a grant of \$30,000 I will provide to NYC Outward Bound and Bronx Kids, Inc., we will sponsor 30 Bronx teens to for the Outward Bound Program and once again send kids to summer camp at Clearpool.

Let me turn to health and wellness, the availability of health services and the conditions under which we live certainly define our environment. I have made a serious commitment to strengthening community based health centers and health care services in this borough.

I must commend the Mayor for taking the lead in opening a Bronx District Public Health Office this past August. I was glad to stand with Council Member Joel Rivera and Assembly Member Jose Rivera to welcome this center into their districts on that hot August day. This center will help us track disease patterns, promote wellness programs and policies, increase coordination and use of health data specific to the South and Central Bronx, and help train and educate health care workers.

Altogether, we provided 1.3 million dollars for local health care to Bronx Lebanon Hospital, Family Health Center, Morrisania's Diagnostic and Treatment Center, the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Diagnostic and Treatment Center, Jacobi Hospital, Woodcrest Center, and Handicapped Adults Association of Co-op City.

This past year our effort extended beyond funding. We launched the Healthy Bronx Campaign. This campaign is aimed at getting the Bronx to take charge of its health and wellness. With the highest obesity, diabetes and smoking rates in New York City we must demand better access to health care and a top-notch health care delivery system, but we must also take charge of our own wellness. These are some of the things we've done in this campaign:

- We've kicked off "The Shape Up New York" physical fitness program
- Hundreds of Bronxites joined me in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's First Annual Bronx "Walk to Cure Diabetes"
- Working with Montefiore Medical Center Harry Belafonte and I held a press conference to raise awareness around the issue of prostate cancer
- Working with Bronx AIDS Network, we participated as a county in the first annual National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, the annual AIDS walk, and World AIDS Day.
- I appointed a 30-member advisory council to deal with issues affecting people with disabilities.
- And we hosted a forum to address the issue of the uninsured.

The 'Healthy Bronx Campaign' is a call to every Bronxite and all who do business or provide services here to work to make the Bronx healthier.

As an urban planner I know that the built environment has a significant impact on us. It is a prerogative of my administration to improve neighborhood quality through better urban design. The rezoning of City Island will preserve its unique character as a maritime

community. In Throgs Neck, I'm glad to be working with Mayor Bloomberg on a rezoning plan to protect this great area of our City from obnoxious over-development. In the northwest Bronx communities of Riverdale, Kingsbridge, and Van Cortlandt a 197-a plan that was crafted by Community Board 8 is now official City planning policy. In the mid-Bronx the rezoning of Washington Avenue, from 163rd to 167th Streets will finally allow us to build more housing and the kinds of businesses that make sense for a residential community. In Port Morris, we are studying a rezoning that will expand a mixed-use district that will allow the use of old industrial buildings for housing and commercial uses, and continue to encourage artists to move into the area. In Hunts Point, I initiated the creation of the Hunts Point Task Force, in partnership with the NYC Economic Development Corporation, to, as our preliminary plan states, "create a vibrant, livable community, invigorated by an accessible waterfront and a thriving business district; sustained by an efficient transportation system and healthy environment; and supported by a vital, skilled workforce.

Let me now thank all the people who have worked on the Hunts Point Task Force, especially the residents, community organizations, businesses and the elected officials who have always believed that Hunts Point and the rest of this area has tremendous potential and promise.

Three weeks ago at a Town Hall Meeting in Olinville, we began the next community-based planning effort for another important section of the Bronx. This area is also suffering from the disregard and lack of consideration for local context from some builders. This will be stopped. I look forward to working with Council Member Seabrook, Assembly member Heastie and State Senator Thompson and local residents to craft the best possible conditions for Olinville.

In addition to these urban design strategies, the creation of Business Improvement Districts around the borough are a real benefit to our business environment. I want to commend the members of the City Council for their support of the BIDs. The latest effort is on Fordham Road and I want to thank Council Members Maria Baez and Joel Rivera for their tireless work to move this BID through the process.

Similarly, there is nearly \$900 million dollars worth of construction going on in the Bronx Civic Center Neighborhood. This construction entails major investment in our roads, bridges, cultural institutions, schools, commuter rail and the 1 million square foot Criminal Court Complex alone will provide 800 permanent jobs and will attract 7,200 visitors to this area everyday. This is the area we also call the Downtown Bronx. Thanks to the efforts of Congressman Serrano, our City Council delegation, our State representatives and my predecessor Ferrer.

I am glad to be part of a Bronx team of community and civic leaders who have shepherded this process to this point. The pouring of this foundation has prepared us for the next phase. I argue yet again that we have the best home for New York City's Police Academy. Everyone agrees that we need a new police academy. Well the Bronx can be it's home.

And then there's Yankee Stadium and the stadium area that was coined Yankee Village. Well, I'm a Jets fan and I like the Nets, I even root for the Mets once in a while. But, I am a die-hard NY Yankees fan...and so are many millions in this borough and region. The Yankees are the Bronx. The Yankees are New York. The Yankees are baseball. I will not accept or support the development of new stadiums for teams that left New York when the going got tough, without first supporting the New York Team and the borough that helped New York's comeback. Mr. Mayor, and Mr. Governor, its time to invest in the Yankee Stadium community. To us this means supporting a hotel and convention center, a new Metro-North Station, an expanded ferry landing on Harlem River, a Yankee Hall of Fame and Museum and a high school for sports medicine and sports industry careers. This means getting a more clear signal from City Hall that you are serious about moving forward on this issue. Let me thank Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff for his full engagement with our admin on so many economic development projects in the Bronx. My office has been in discussions with the NYC Economic Development Corporation now for 24 months on many projects. This one however means a lot to the Bronx and the City...on this one, let's hit a home run.

Parks are essential for livable communities. Over the last 24 months we've invested more than \$6.7 million for Parks development in Bronx River Concrete Park, Crotona Park, Pelham Bay Park, Haffen Park, Fort Four Park, Roberto Clemente Park, Story Playground and Harding Park Community Center. My level of commitment to neighborhood and regional parks will continue unabated.

My commitment to developing a Harlem River Park and Esplanade remains. You've heard this before; we are now working with Commissioner Benepe of the Parks Department to make this dream a reality. I remain steadfast in my commitment to reopen the historic Highbridge and redevelop the Bronx side of Highbridge Park. We will do this. Last year, I announced my intentions to develop ice skating rinks in the parks of the Bronx. I am pleased to report that we have made progress in this initiative and this coming year I will have news about which parks have been selected to have ice skating rinks.

I think most of you by know how much I care about water and the waterfront. The development of the Bronx waterfront is critical to the future of our City. The Bronx Waterfront Task Force that I announced at last year's address has done a yeoman's job. In a few weeks, I will hold a press conference to present the final Bronx Waterfront Plan.

Many Waterfront projects are already underway. Like the reconstruction of the pier and the pathways at Castle Hill Park. Last month, the New York Local Waterfront Revitalization Program allocated almost \$400,000 to Bronx waterfront projects. I'm very pleased the State is recognizing the value and potential of the beautiful Bronx waterfront. We will work with every neighborhood, because every neighborhood has a unique relationship with its waterfront.

In addition to zoning that will preserve City Island's maritime character, we will enhance

public access to Belden Point, that southernmost tip of the island. This project will provide public amenities and educate visitors on City Island's maritime heritage.

This year we will spend \$200,000 on the Bronx River watershed. At one time considered a dead waterway and dumping ground, the river is now roaring back to life and will be enjoyed by future generations of Bronxites. Thanks to the Bronx River Alliance.

The Bronx is progressing towards environmental friendliness through policy initiative. The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (explain about BOEDC) has established Bronx Initiative for Energy and the Environment. Under this initiative, three grant programs were enacted with the financial support of the NYPA. We are thankful for the aid offered by the NYPA, and I would like to especially thank NYPA CEO Gene Zeltman for his support for improving the Bronx's environment.

Through the New York City Economic Development Corporation, we have also secured an \$800-thousand dollar grant for local environmental projects that will benefit the entire Hunts Point community. I want to thank Community Board 2 for working with us on this project.

Housing remains our most critical need. With that in mind, I am very pleased and honored to say that for the year 2003 housing development efforts have been very successful. In 2003, we built or reconstructed nearly 4,700 housing with a total investment of \$300 million. My direct contribution of \$4,720,000 for housing capital projects has leveraged \$212 million in investment into the borough's neighborhoods.

We've worked with the New York City Partnership to build new homes in:

Crotona Park West, □

Mount □ Hope,

Grant Avenue □

Melrose Commons □

Boston Rd. South □

□ Stebbins Briscoe

Twin Parks East areas; □

East 152nd Street developed □ under the auspices of Habitat For Humanity;

for a total of 403 units valued at over 50 million dollars.

I have also provided funding for 427 housing units for the elderly to be constructed in 6 neighborhoods: Belmont, Westchester Square, two projects in Melrose Commons, and right down the street from where we are now on Gun Hill Road, the Pavilion at Immaculate Conception.

Let us not forget the persistent problem of homelessness. For too long, the City's response to homelessness has been shelter as a first and often only line of response. I believe that it is critical that the City invest in new solutions to age-old problems - and those investments must be at the community level, where those at risk can be identified and served before their housing crisis results in homelessness.

Additionally, in response to our concerns about the volume of people entering the only Emergency Assistance Unit in the City, located right here in Bronx, the Department Homeless Services has recently opened another intake center in Manhattan to accept adult families. This will enable more families to get processed sooner and more efficiently, and removing the Bronx from exclusively bearing the burden for the homeless. The opening of this intake center is a step in the right direction, but only a small step toward a long-term solution.

Now, on economic development, let me share some highlights of what's been happening with some of our major projects and what you can expect in terms of new initiatives in this year.

Since our focus is job creation and job connections, let me first tell you that through loans we have granted through the Empowerment Zone and the Bronx Initiative Corporation, we have created 870 new jobs and retained 985. I'm very proud of the work that Ray Salaberrios, President of the BOEDC and Madeline Marquez of the Bronx Initiative Corporation are doing. Please help me recognize their work.

Now here's the rundown:

The Hunts Point Fish Market, formerly known as the Fulton Fish Market, will open in the Spring of 2005, bringing 800 jobs and more than 65 businesses to the Bronx. The BOEDC will assist these businesses with financing for construction, equipment purchasing, and working capital.

In the coming months, working with Assembly Members Jose Rivera and Luis Diaz, Council Member Maria Baez and State Senator Efrain Gonzalez, and my office, the NYC Economic Development Corporation will issue a request for proposals for the Kingsbridge Armory. After years of animated public discussion about the future of the armory, we will see a request for proposals that reflects the wishes of the community and makes economic sense for the Bronx.

As part of the Yankee Stadium community development plan, we are working closely with the administration, the NY Yankees and local elected officials to redevelop the old and under-utilized Bronx Terminal Market. The market will complement the larger plan for the future of Yankee Stadium and will create hundreds of jobs, a waterfront park, retail and entertainment uses and a velodrome for use during the 2012 Olympics, if our bid is successful.

Access to capital is critical for successful economic and industrial development. This year, BOEDC, through its subsidiary Bronx Improvement Corporation has approved six loans totaling \$2.8 million. These six loans helped to leverage funds from banks totaling over \$4 million and private investments of nearly \$1 million helping to generate more business and jobs in the Bronx.

BOEDC's five-year strategic plan builds on the momentum created by all of these projects by implementing the following programs.

- Creation of a Visitor Center that takes advantage of the fact that over 3 million people come to the South Bronx each year to see a Yankees Game. The kiosk will encourage fans to venture beyond the stadium with literature, maps, calendars of upcoming special events and special discount coupons.
- Develop a series of walking tours that encourage visitors to spend dollars in shopping strips and restaurants in the Empowerment Zone.
- Working in conjunction with the Bronx Council on the Arts, BOEDC will establish an Arts & Crafts Market featuring the works of local craftspeople.

When I began this address, I said that today we begin the Bronx at Work Campaign. Let me outline some specific proposals for this campaign. Remember: this is about job creation and job connections.

Long-term unemployed and recently dislocated workers are an immediate concern. This year, we will partner with the Bronx One-Stop Career Center to create job connections for long-term unemployed and dislocated workers with businesses receiving loans from the City and State. I would like to recognize Amy Betances of the Bronx One- Stop Career Center for all the amazing work that she and her staff do to help unemployed Bronx residents.

With the City's economic decline, recent statistics have shown that the public safety net is failing many in the Bronx. At such a time as this, it is the responsibility of government to offer meaningful assistance to the public. Our Community Services Unit- ably led by Benny Catala- has been extremely helpful in getting information to Bronx residents about programs and providing assistance. Thank you Benny and to your wonderful team.

With the dramatic increase in those struggling through financial hardship, I feel it is important to make government assistance work more effectively. We will collaborate with government partners to advertise available services in welfare, health insurance, food stamps, and Section 8.

At some point last year, one-quarter of our borough's residents could not afford to buy food. While there are 208 community food programs in the Bronx, borough residents don't know where to access food in their own neighborhood. This connection must be made. I'm glad to announce that we will partner with the Food Bank for New York City to create a "Bronx Food Program Directory" to get this information out. Please acknowledge the President of the Food Bank for New York City, Dr. Lucy Cabrera. The Food Bank reports that nearly 24% of the 60.5 million pounds of food they distributed last year went to families and individuals in the Bronx. Thank you for all you've done.

Our government spends hundreds of thousands of dollars in the Bronx to fund

unemployment, public benefits and job training programs; and to service and contract with businesses. I think that it is about time that we know what we get for those dollars. This coming year, we will conduct several studies: in partnership with the Fiscal Policy Institute- “ The Bronx Employment Study” - to survey unemployment; in partnership with the Community Service Society- “the Bronx Public Benefits Study”- to survey residents about their access to public benefits; the "Better Bronx Jobs Return on Investment Study" to evaluate the effectiveness of job training programs; “the Bronx Satellite Business Services Study” to examine the cost effectiveness of having a City small business services office in the Bronx; and finally “the Bronx Minority Business Study” to evaluate the effectiveness of City contracting. Let’s see how our dollars are being used and how effective these programs are.

While studies are important, they are not enough to make a dent in improving our unemployment numbers. We must also make legislative changes. To this end, I look forward to working with our Bronx State Assembly and Senate Delegations to push for the passage of several pieces of important pending legislation that will: increase the state minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour; strengthen the local employer-led, state Workforce Investment Boards; decentralize and create more accountability for workforce investment areas; establish the Empire State Jobs program; expand access to basic education programs for public assistance recipients; and make substantive changes to the State’s Strategic Training Alliance Program. We understand the real world of legislation. Legislation is often not passed solely on the merits; it needs the support of a coalition. I look forward to joining this fight with state lawmakers; and community, clergy, labor, and political organizations- such as the Working Families Party and the ‘\$5.15 Is Not Enough’ campaign- to see these pieces of legislation passed.

This year, I am pleased to announce that we will begin next fall with a pilot program for Bronx high school students with Standards & Poors as a part of the “Bronx Wall Street Financial Education Program.” We will get our youngsters to work in the financial industry, and teach Bronx families to save and invest.

Under the current conditions, ninety percent of low-income families will not have access to a computer or the Internet until the year 2020. On the other hand, affluent families have had full access since 2001. This year, we will launch the “Bronx Computer Access and Literacy Campaign.” We will work to increase our community’s access to computers and the internet by working with Per Scholas- a Bronx-based organization that sells low-cost, recycled computers to families with limited resources. I would like to thank Plinio Ayala, President and CEO of Per Scholas for joining us here today.

One of the biggest problems with doing business in New York is the regulatory nightmare companies face. We need to get out of the way, and let business do business. In the next year, I will organize “The Bronx Borough President Business Teams” to help businesses cut through bureaucratic red tape. Let’s give entrepreneurs a reason to do business in the Bronx.

I am asking for your help today in sending a message to Governor Pataki. Free up the

Liberty Bonds for projects in The Bronx. These bonds provide \$2 billion in tax-exempt financing for development throughout New York City. \$113.9 million in Liberty Bonds went toward the construction of a 10-story building in Brooklyn. A proportional amount of Liberty Bonds should be awarded to the Bronx. This will allow the \$53 Million, 160,000 square foot mixed-use commercial development in the HUB to take place.

In the last decade, wholesale trade grew nationally by 12.5% but it declined by 15% in the City. This year, I will work to pressure the Mayor to diversify the City economy by supporting export industries critical to the outer boroughs. We need to encourage growth and diversification in the wholesale trade business.

In our challenged economy, we need to make connections between businesses and residents of the Bronx. To that end, I will organize a Job Creation Summit in the coming year. We will bring experts from the Bronx's strong health care sector – places like Einstein Medical Center and other institutions the Bronx is known for - to expand our effort to create jobs in the Bronx. This summit will include people from all different sectors of the economy. Our intention is to link labor sector activities through one office and organizational structure.

Finally, we can create structure to help people find jobs. This year we will create “Bronx JobTV.” A daily listing of jobs, available on local cable access. Bronx JobTV will mirror our www.bronxatwork.com website. A “job line” electronic mailing list will be set up as an e-mail newsletter to complement the website. As another part of the website, I will create, “The Bronx Internship Bank,” for our borough's high school students. People won't have to look further than their TV set or computer for a number to call for a possible job or internship opportunity. We can lower unemployment by making the connection between those who need jobs with businesses that need employees.

So...my friends.... with our on-going mission to best serve Bronx residents and with this year's Bronx At Work campaign.... we hope to reach the lives of everyone like Joe Sulle...who simply wants what all of us want: a full-time job on full-time pay; a good school with good teachers; a clean environment; a decent home in a safe neighborhood; a vibrant area to shop and do business in; real quality health care protection. And, if I might add, bold and honest leadership from each and every public official.

Challenges are before us my friends – economic and otherwise – but I believe today what I've always believed...that nothing really happens unless you make it happen.

In that spirit, I call on all my friends here today...my colleagues in government, community group leaders, teachers, students, everyone...to join me in this ambitious campaign. Because...together...we are The Bronx At Work!