Standing alongside Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., outside the Tread Courthouse in Lower Manhattan, Borough President Adams released “Fixing the Pipes: Solutions to Disparities in Gifted Education in New York City,” their new report outlining multiple recommendations for the future of gifted and talented education in New York City’s public schools. Their findings, announced on Wednesday, June 21st, are the work of the borough presidents’ Gifted & Talented Education Task Force. Recommendations in the 22-page report included requiring that all communities have equal access to gifted and talented programs in kindergarten; that all students in public pre-K programs be tested for gifted and talented programs; that every student qualifies for a gifted and talented program be given a seat in their community; that citywide K-8 and middle school gifted and talented classes be expanded across the city; that the DOE provide free busing across boroughs at the elementary level to provide better access to gifted and talented programs; that each borough have a special education for gifted and talented students. The task force, made up of governor and state officials, citywide administrators, community members, and parents who are familiar with the issues gifted and talented students face in New York City schools, hosted several public hearings earlier this year to discuss issues surrounding gifted and talented education in New York City public schools.

Borough President Adams submitted a recommendation to approve an application to reactivate the site of the former Kingston Lounge, a historic jazz club in Crown Heights. He unveiled his Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) recommendation on Tuesday, June 20th as part of an application regarding a deteriorated, vacant property at 120 Kingston Avenue, which was home to a renowned live music venue first established in 1944 that has provided cultural significance to the neighborhood. Borough President Adams issued several recommendations for the project, including the need to retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, particularly local business enterprises (LBEs) and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBWEs) as well as the creation of a security plan to mitigate noise and potential disturbances to nearby residents. He emphasized the opportunity for local hiring of workers and notification of such listings with Brooklyn Community Board (CB) 8, including for construction jobs as well as permanent jobs within the establishment.

In celebration of National Pollinator Week, Borough President Adams joined second grade students wearing monarch butterfly wings in their school garden at PS 29 John M. Harrigan in Coblentz Hall on Thursday, June 22nd to sign a nationwide pledge making Brooklyn a monarch city in the United States to help save the monarch butterfly, a pollinating insect species that has declined by about 90 percent over the last 20 years. Alongside members of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), he signed the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge, affirming his plan to enact a range of educational and environmental action items in the coming year. Borough President Adams emphasized the importance of getting Brooklyn’s children involved in the fight to save our environment and its pollinators from the many threats they face. During the ceremony, he toured the pollinator garden created at the school, which is also used as an outdoor classroom, and received seed packets from the students to plant in his own garden at home. PS 29 John M. Harrigan is a participant in the NWF’s Growing Your Wild NYC pollinator recovery project. Through the leadership of science teacher Tiri Aprea Flores, herself a passionate gardener devoted to the cause of pollinator recovery.

In response to the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)’s 25 percent fare reduction announcement and persistent Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) subway signal problems, Borough President Adams released a letter to himself and a bipartisan coalition of more than 20 Brooklyn elected officials that was sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo on Thursday, June 29th, calling on the State to rescind the measure and use the recaptured funding to frontload repairs to the MTA. They emphasized how this work is especially important in Brooklyn, as additional strain to the system is expected with the proposed relocation of LIRR trains this summer due to upcoming repairs to the Canarsie Tunnel. Borough President Adams and his colleagues urged Governor Cuomo to work with the MTA to outline a plan for this repair work, including the shutdown of the Canarsie Tunnel over a weekend to fast-track this work. The letter noted Governor Cuomo’s executive order declaring a state of emergency for the MTA, allowing the organization to speed up procurement and repairs to the system. To that end, Borough President Adams and his colleagues expressed how it is imperative that the $1 billion in additionally proposed funds from the State come with additional funding sources that meet the MTA’s critical needs.

Happy Pride! Borough President Adams celebrated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Pride Month by raising the multi-colored Pride flag at Brooklyn Borough Hall on Monday, June 5th. Retired Brigadier General Loree Sutton, commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS), was the keynote speaker at the unveiling. At a community awards ceremony and reception the next day, Borough President Adams presented citations to several individuals and organizations working to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people across Brooklyn.

In honor of the late pop icon, Borough President Adams co-hosted a Prince Dance Party on Wednesday, June 6th at Steeplechase Plaza in Coney Island, along with Council Member Mark Treyger and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks). The crowd danced the night away on the Riegelmann Boardwalk to the beats of Prince’s most beloved hits. Congratulations to the Class of 2017! Borough President Adams hosted a BBQ party outside Brooklyn Borough Hall on Thursday, June 8th for students who had received one of his graduation awards this school year, highlighting academic achievement and community service. The reception was highlighted by outdoor games, entertainment, and grilled favorites. On Sunday, June 11th, Borough President Adams capped his second annual Central Brooklyn Arts & Culture Weekend, which took place in the stretch of Eastern Parkway between Grand Army Plaza and Washington Avenue. The day was headlined by a “Welcome Back to Brooklyn” ceremony in which he bestowed engraved pavers along the Brooklyn Botanic Garden’s famed Celebrity Path, as well as the “keys to Brooklyn,” to multi-platinum hip-hop star Fabolous and groundbreaking abstract/neo-expressionist artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, both of whom are world-famous sons of the borough.

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Borough President Adams declared the month of June to be Brooklyn’s Homelessness Awareness Month, taking a number of actions throughout the month that highlighted this citywide crisis. This Month, the Coalition for the Homeless estimated that there were nearly 16,000 homeless families in New York City, comprising more than three-quarters of the homeless shelter population. On the evening of Thursday, June 15th, he volunteered overnight at a temporary men’s shelter at Congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope, organized by the CAMBA Respite Bed Program. The next morning, he joined New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Steven Banks to educate families about the City’s housing support services outside PS 532 New Bridges Elementary School in Crown Heights. Borough President Adams co-sponsored two community events with DSS to advance community volunteerism and connect at-risk families with critical resources; a workshop was held on Wednesday, June 21st at Medgar Evers College in Crown Heights and a resource fair took place on Saturday, June 24th at Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Bedford-Stuyvesant. As part of his engagement with Brooklyn’s clergy, Borough President Adams met with groups of faith leaders around the borough to mobilize their congregations, holding conversations in Bushwick, Downtown Brooklyn, and Greenpoint. In addition, his office coordinated street team outreach at school graduations across Brooklyn in partnership with the AFRO-PUNK Army. Those interested in more information on Borough President Adams’ efforts to combat homelessness are encouraged to email askeric@brooklynbp.nyc.gov.

On Monday, June 19th, Borough President Adams and PTALink held an leadership training in the Courtroom of Brooklyn Borough Hall for parent-teacher association (PTA) and parent association (PA) leaders. The meeting focused on how parents can become effective advocates in their children’s schools and how they can work with school administrators to make changes that improve the day-to-day lives of their children and the education they receive. Every New York City public school is required by the State education law and the New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor’s Regulations to have a PA/PTA, and all parents of children in a school are automatically eligible to be members. PTAs and PTAs face many financial hurdles, particularly in socioeconomically challenged areas of Brooklyn. Borough President Adams believes it is vital for schools to encourage parents to build up strong associations that foster learning around running an effective meeting, fundraising, retaining parents who attend meetings consistently, and writing grants. He encourages parents to go to ptalink.org for further information on PA/PTA capacity building.

Following a violent attack on 38-year-old Domingo Diego-Tapia, Borough President Adams held a candlelight vigil on Tuesday, June 20th on the corner of Fulton and Albany streets alongside the victim’s wife to urge the community to assist the police in capturing the attacker. In the early morning hours of Thursday, June 8th, the Bedford-Stuyvesant father of two was sucker punched off his bicycle by an attacker on the corner of Fulton and Albany streets, causing him to fall and fracture his skull; Diego-Tapia remains in a coma at Kings County Hospital. At the candlelight vigil, Borough President Adams joined a representative of the Consul General of Mexico, community activists, faith leaders, and local residents to stand in solidarity with the family of Diego-Tapia, a Mexican immigrant who owns a fruit stand on Church Avenue, and call for a unified community response against violence against cyclists. He also addressed the issue of police responsibility in commenting on open cases of cyclist fatalities, a matter that has resurfaced in the wake of recent traffic fatalities in Chelsea. To assist the family in covering medical and living expenses during this difficult time, please donate to gudfmda.com/support-for-dominigo-tapia.

Our Constituent Assistance Center is here to serve all of Brooklyn. If you or someone you know are having an issues, or if you have questions about topics such as alternate side parking, sidewalk pickup, or other community matters, including the topics in this month’s update, call the Center at (718) 852-3700.