

the meridian

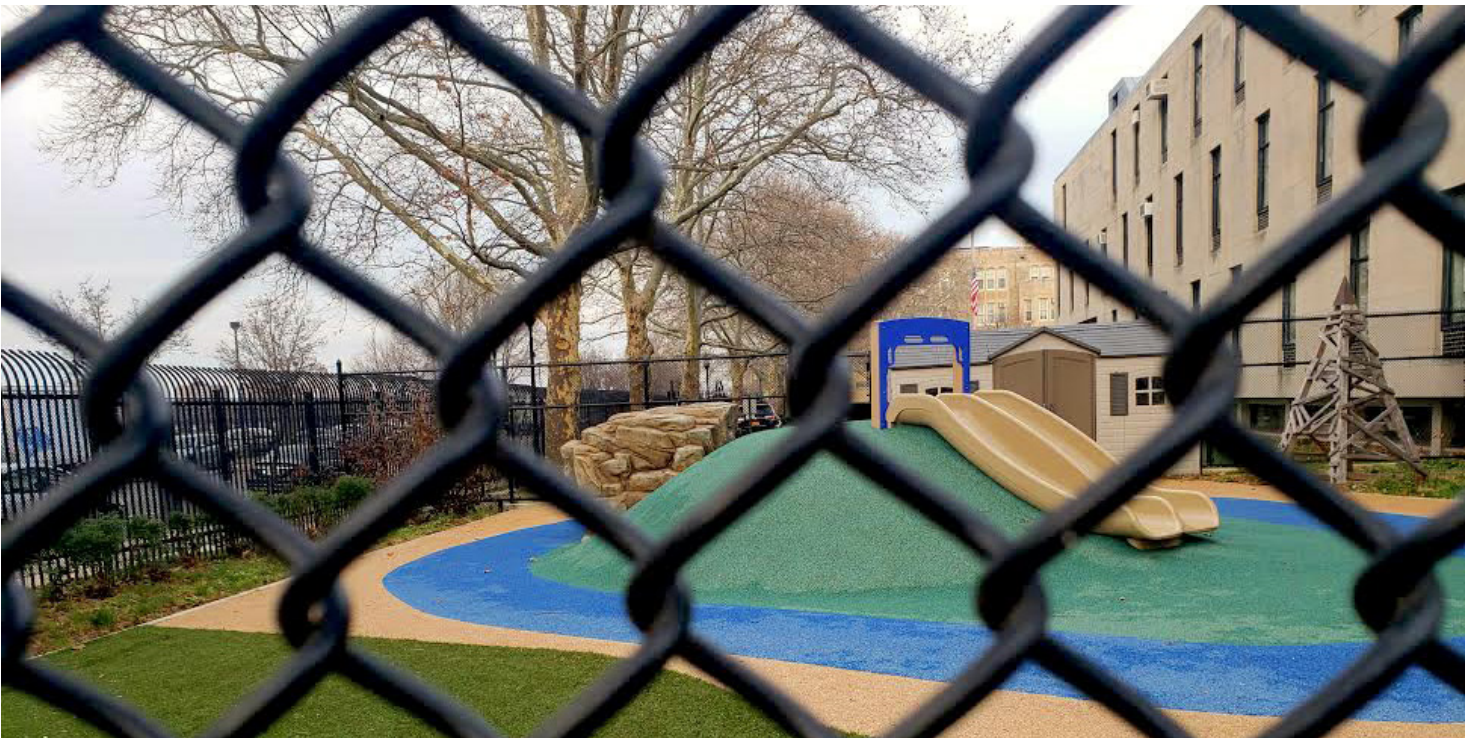
THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

January, 2019

lehmanmeridian.squarespace.com

Bronx, New York

CUNY \$6M Grant Will Help Revamp Lehman's Child Care Center



One of the playgrounds available by Lehman's gate 3 entrance in front of Goulden Avenue. Article and photo by Perla Tolentino. [Page 3]



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Lehman Community Mourns the
Loss of New York Native Stan Lee

Page 6



LIFESTYLE

'Blunt Talk' Sparks Conversation on
Marijuana Use among CUNY Students

Page 10



LIFESTYLE

Lehman Students Protest
Proposed MTA Fare Hikes

Page 11

the meridian

THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

250 Bedford Park Boulevard West
Student Life Building Room 108
Bronx, NY 10468

BUILD YOUR PORTFOLIO WITH US

Be part of our team of reporters, writers, photographers, videographers and artists. Send your sample writing, photography, and/or art to our email, or come find us in our office at the Student Life Building Room 108.

the staff

SHAIANN FRAZIER

EDITOR IN CHIEF

HECTOR BELLO

MANAGING EDITOR

LYSA VANIBLE

OFFICE MANAGER

ZOE FANZO

PRINT PRODUCER/WEB DESIGNER

KIMBERLLEE MENDEZ

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

JENNIFER MACKENZIE

FACULTY ADVISOR

PERLA TOLENTINO

NEWS EDITOR

JONATHAN RIVERA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

BRITTANY AUFIERO

LIFESTYLE EDITOR

ALLEGRA MYERS

COPY EDITOR

Questions? Comments? Write us at lehmanmeridian@gmail.com

Check out our website: lehmanmeridian.squarespace.com

WRITERS: BRITTANY AUFIERO, TERESA FANZO, THAIRY PONTIER LANTIGUA,
ALEXIS MARTINEZ, JONATHAN RIVERA, FELICHA STEVENS, PERLA TOLENTINO

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Meridian reserves the right to edit articles and letters as the editor(s) see fit. The views expressed in editorials are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Meridian staff. Ads published both in print and online do not reflect the views or opinions of the Meridian staff. The message or product being sold in the ad may not be in accordance with our staff's personal beliefs. The Meridian articles, in whole or in part, may only be reprinted with permission from the editor(s) of The Meridian. All letters, opinions and articles sent to us must have the name, phone number, and email address of the author for verification. Letters without the author's name(s) will be ignored. Upon request, authors' names may be withheld from publication.

CUNY \$6M Grant Will Help Revamp Lehman's Child Care Center

By Perla Tolentino



Lehman's child care center. Photo by Perla Tolentino.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded CUNY a \$6 million grant exclusively for child care centers. Lehman, Brooklyn, Baruch, Bronx Community, Kingsborough, and LaGuardia colleges were announced as recipients of the grant on Oct. 22, 2018. According to CUNY news

outlets, LaGuardia will increase their enrollment capacities in 2019 to 263 and offer emotional and mental health resources for parents, and Kingsborough Community College plans to lower its childcare rate to as low as \$1 per week for parents who attend classes.

Lehman staff and student parents had many suggestions for how to use the funds at Lehman's childcare center, which currently has six classrooms, two outside playgrounds, and a multipurpose room for gross motor play, after-school activities and celebrations. "I believe the funds should be used to create

new programs including arts, crafts and music. They should reinforce the children's food menu and library and also expand the playgrounds or invest in outside trips," said Lisette Ventura, a 35-year-old mother and junior Spanish major at Lehman.

The center currently serves children between ages of two and nine years old and offers speech and hearing counseling, as well as education workshops focusing on behavior management and child development. The center also has a Pre-K program that offers full day classes to four-year-old children, funded by the New York City Department of Education. The goal of the program is to help with kindergarten preparation utilizing New York State Core Learning standards.

Another use of the grant money would be to pay for longer hours at the childcare center. Bronx Community College now plans to extend their hours from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m., according to AM New York. However, Jaci Maurer,

director of Lehman's childcare center, questioned this choice. "Leaving from the campus so late at night may be convenient for the students, but is it for the children?" she inquired. "We advertise to be open until 9 p.m., but in some cases until 9:30 p.m. I believe that's enough."

Later hours would help Martha Vergara, a Lehman sophomore and social work major who has a 9-year-old son. She explained that "balancing school and parenting is very hard for the both of us." She was unaware that Lehman's childcare center was open until 9:30 p.m. "What I'm doing this semester is leaving my son in the cafeteria until I finish my class."

Maurer believes that there are more urgent needs than schedule changes, and that parents have been surveyed about their priorities. "Our focus is to support staff members and parents," she explained. "Social work and family training are some of the resources we will most likely invest in, which will

alleviate the financial burden of the parents, as well as their busy life. Our goal is to help families stay in school."

According to a care.com survey from July 17, 2018, the cost of childcare is increasing every year, leaving only 30 percent of American families able to afford it. This research also revealed that 63 percent of parents agree that the cost of childcare can affect their career decisions.

In the Bronx, where US Census Bureau shows that the median family income is \$36,593 per year with a poverty rate of 28 percent, parents struggle to afford childcare needs. To help lower-income parents at Lehman, the childcare center works with the Federal Block Grant which helps students afford child care expenses based on their income level.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for these students who are thriving through college and taking care of their children as well," said Maurer.

the meridian

THE STUDENT VOICE OF LEHMAN COLLEGE

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR UP-TO-DATE DIGITAL NEWS, STAFF BIOS, AND LEHMAN EVENTS. REQUEST AN AD OR GET IT TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM!

LEHMANMERIDIAN.SQUARESPACE.COM

Former President Bush's Passing Signals End of an Era

By Jonathan Rivera



President Bush pictured in 1992. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

“The man served his country for over 40 years. He wasn’t the best president, but he served our country well,” said sophomore Orlando Green, a sociology major, regarding the passing of President George Herbert Walker Bush.

On Nov. 30, 2018, the 41st president of the United States passed away at the age of 94, but his legacy still lives on.

The patriarch of his family, Bush dedicated over 40 years of his life to

public service. He stepped into the political field when he ran for U.S. Senate in 1964. Narrowly defeated by Democrat Ralph Yarborough, he went on to serve as U.S. ambassador to China as well as director of the CIA before being elected President in 1988. He was the first Vice President in 152 years to be elected president. “Freedom is at the very heart of the idea that is America. Giving life to the idea depends on every one of us,” Bush said in his 1990 State of the Union Address.

During operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Bush deployed U.S. forces into Saudi Arabia to help expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait during the start of the Gulf War.

Joye Decker, a junior in an adult degree program student said, “I remember the Gulf war on television when I was a kid. It’s a black eye in our history.”

Bush’s death surprised many Lehman students who were familiar with both his administration and his influence on today’s political landscape. “When I heard the news, I was shocked. It wasn’t that long [ago] that Barbara had died,” said Lehman junior, Joanna Rosario.

Others viewed his passing as a blessing for Bush since he suffered many ailments in his advanced age. After the death of his wife, he suffered a blood infection that led to sepsis.

“He’s finally at rest,” said CUNY Office Assistant, Crystal Jackson. “He seemed so fragile after his wife died.”

Lehman Community Mourns the Loss of New York Native Stan Lee

By Teresa Fanzo



Stan Lee at Phoenix Comicon, pictured in 2011. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

“I will miss seeing his cameos in every Marvel movie,” said Peter Watson, a Lehman freshman.

Stan Lee, the comic book writer known for the creation of many Marvel characters such as Spider-Man and the Hulk, died at the age of 95 on November 12, 2018. His death came as a shock to the comic world and the pop culture industry.

Born Stanley Martin Lieber in Manhattan, Lee moved to the Bronx when he was a teenager. Growing up he was inspired by books and movies

“I mourn Stan not just as an innovator and storyteller but as a New Yorker and a Bronxite.”

- Lehman Senior and film and television studies major Juan Vasquez

and admired heroic figures like Robin Hood. Stan Lee went to Clinton High School, less than a mile away from Lehman College.

According to biography.com, Lee became an assistant in the Timely Comic division of Pulp Magazine, an inexpensive nonfiction magazine, in 1939. By the 1960s, Timely evolved into Marvel Comics when the company launched the Fantastic Four. He made his debut in May of 1941 with writing filler, plots that do not actually progress the story, for “Captain America Foils the Traitor’s Revenge.” He used a pen

name, Stan Lee, which he would later adopt as his legal name.

By the end of the 1950s, he considered leaving his job. He was dissatisfied and he was not given the opportunity to write the stories he wanted. During this time, Lee was on the verge of quitting, but with his wife's advice, he began writing the kind of stories he enjoyed.

The DC comics editor, Julius Schwartz, first introduced the public to the concept of the super-team with the Justice League of America. To combat this, Lee was tasked with the assignment

to create their company's own super-team.

Lee and his partner, Jack Kirby, created the Hulk, Thor, Iron Man, Doctor Strange, and arguably Marvel's most successful character, Spider-Man. These characters were grouped into Marvel's super-team, The Avengers.

Stan Lee created a world of relatable characters and intriguing storylines. In 2008, the comic studio ventured into the film industry, and since 2008, Lee has had a cameo feature in every single Marvel film.

Lee was an icon who revolutionized the comic industry and inspired many Lehman students. Junior and film and television studies major Julia Brennan said, "I grew up reading Marvel comics. Spider-Man is the first movie I remember seeing in theatres as a kid, so I hold a great sense of gratitude towards Stan Lee."

Senior and Lehman film and television studies major Juan Vasquez said, "The sorrow that was his passing transcended the comics world. I mourn Stan not just as an innovator and storyteller but as a New Yorker and a Bronxite."

Smashing Pumpkins' New Album Brings Back Classic Sound

By Jonathan Rivera

"Shiny and Oh So Bright, Vol 1" is The Smashing Pumpkins first album in over four years and takes fans back to their classic sound.

Their latest album commemorates the return of founding guitarist, James Iha, after his two-decade hiatus from lead singer Billy Corgan, drummer Jimmy Chamberlin and Jeff Schroeder on guitar and keyboard. With Iha back, the classic balance of this alternative rock mega-group has been reestablished.

The first song "Knights of Malta" is a pseudo-emo anthem that is reminiscent of "1979" a hit song from their "Mellon Collie and Infinite Sadness" album. "You'll just rise on forever...When doldrums age in platinum," it croons.

"Solara," the album's most memorable, offers the listener classic Pumpkins' sound with a neoclassic twist. "Tear down the sun. Bring down the sun," it exhorts.

While well known for their hit albums "Siamese Dream" and "Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness," the band



"Shiny and Oh So Bright, Vol 1" album cover. Photo by Jonathan Rivera.

suffered a series of unsuccessful album releases over the span of the 30-year span of their music career. Their album "Adore" was one of the most anticipated albums of 1998 but fell short of fans expectations, selling only 174,000. Their previous album sold 246,500 in its first week.

Iha's departure from the Pumpkins created a new sound from the band, with "Machina," their first album without Iha, ushering in a new era of Pumpkins music of further declining album sales. "Machina" sold only 583,000, making it

the second lowest selling album released by the group.

Iha's return brings back the classic sound that die-hard fans will appreciate, especially in "Silvery Sometimes," where the steady guitar rhythm reflects Iha as a master musician and recalls "Tonight, Tonight," one of the time-honored favorites of Smashing Pumpkins' fans. Lehman junior and English major Albert Gonzalez said, "I'm glad that Iha came back for this album. He is the driving force of the band's rhythm in their songs."

‘Widows’ Wows Audiences with Empowering Message for Women

By Brittany Aufiero



Film poster for ‘Widows.’ Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

In a long tradition of Hollywood heist thrillers dominated by male actors, “Widows” holds its own, breaking the mold with its female-led cast directed by Steve McQueen.

“Widows” earned the box office an impressive \$53.6 million worldwide, \$33.5 of which were from ticket sales in the U.S. and Canada alone. Released Nov. 16, the film was co-written by McQueen and Gillian Flynn. Flynn is best known as the writer of “Gone Girl,” a novel published in 2012, about a woman seeking revenge on

her adulterous husband. Flynn’s flair for gritty, female-driven stories is exceptionally portrayed in “Widows.”

Viola Davis stars as the thick-skinned Veronica Rawlings. She plays a woman whose life is left in shambles following the death of her husband, Harry, played by Liam Neeson, after a heist that went wrong. In the midst of her grief, she is visited by Jamal Manning and Daniel Kaluuya, who play a crime lord and politician looking for the \$2 million that Harry stole.

Manning wants his money and expects Veronica to pay up. Veronica enlists the help of the widows of her dead husband’s heist team, Alice Gunner, played by Elizabeth Debicki and Linda Parelli, played by actress Michelle Rodriguez. It is an attempt to pull off one last robbery in order to pay off the debt and start a new life.

“Widows” is an emotionally compelling and violent story of survival. Through Veronica, the audience can understand the complex role race can play in a marriage. When their unarmed son is pulled over by police and shot, Harry grows to resent his wife for her black skin. In the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter Movement, Veronica’s story feels particularly relevant to the racial struggles that many people endure in the modern day justice system.

Meanwhile, Alice becomes an escort

so that she can make ends meet following the death of her abusive husband. She enters into an exclusive sexual arrangement with a wealthy real estate executive, David, but feels uncomfortable with the power imbalance.

While Veronica and Alice easily comply with the demands of the heist, Linda struggles to find a sitter for her children. Veronica begins to doubt her commitment to the heist, but Linda stands her ground and argues that she’ll do it for her children. Ultimately, they prove that women don’t have to be amazing fighters or gun aficionados in order to belong in an action movie.

Queens resident, Suzie Diep said, “Viola Davis’s performance was amazing.” She added that she felt that the movie did a good job dealing with classism and racism.

Lehman professor of political science, Dr. Jason Schulman, 45, said, “It’s a film with real depth. It transcends genre conventions, and refreshingly, puts female characters at the center of a drama. The men are just there to move the plot along.”

“Widows” is extremely powerful in ways that are both figurative and literal. It is insightful and explores the powerful minds of women who have reached their breaking point. This is definitely a must-see.

Morgan Library Exhibit ‘It’s Alive’ Showcases Frankenstein’s Author

By Alexis Martinez



A 1931 Carl Laemmle poster. Photo by Alexis Martinez.

Frankenreads, an international exhibit celebrating the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley’s novel “Frankenstein,” gave Lehman students further insight into the cult classic and aspects of Shelley’s life. The exhibit opened up at the Morgan Library Museum on 225 Madison Ave. Lehman English professor, Olivia Moy, assigned a student visit on Nov. 16, 2018. Her

goal was for students to become more invested in the novel and its author. Isha Serrano, a Lehman English major, said, “I managed to get up close and personal with Mary Shelley’s muse for making “Frankenstein”.

The exhibit showcased different editions of the book, as well as reinterpretations of the cult classic from spinoffs,

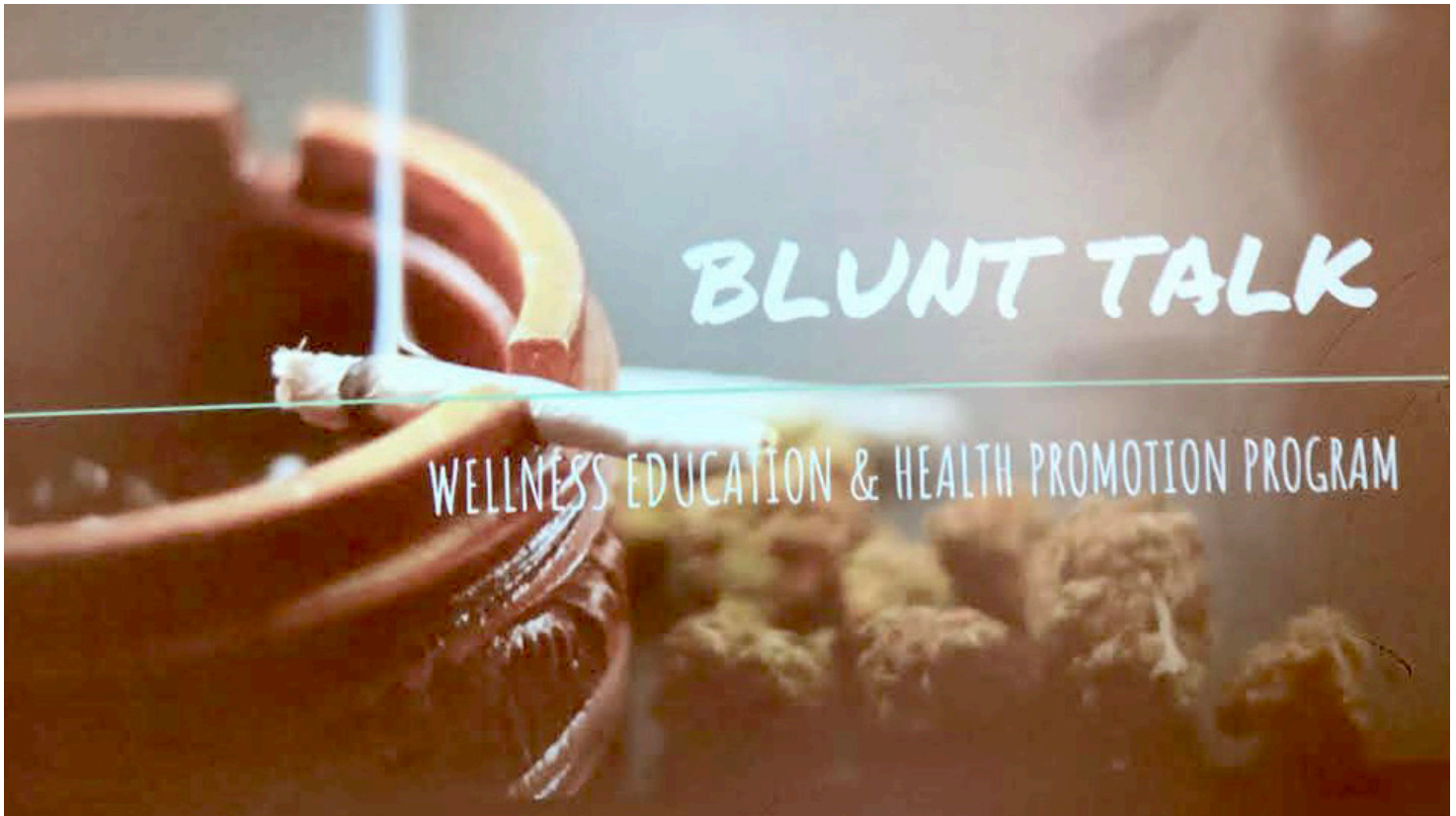
mashups, parodies, and tributes. In addition, it entailed the history of Shelley’s life and memorabilia. Her artwork embodied elements typically conveyed in romantic literature such as life, death, vivid scenery, and intensified passion. “Nightmare” was one of the many gothic paintings on display, featuring a goblin with yellow cat eyes perched on top of a woman’s chest. The class also viewed different animated renditions of the book and artifacts of tools used to amputate limbs for the formation of Frankenstein, who is also known as “the Monster”, “the Creature”, and “the Wretch”.

Elements of Shelley’s past that influenced her novel were also on display. Shelley was born to celebrity parents Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. She lost her mother two weeks after she was born, which frayed her relationship with her father. As a result, she had an isolated and rebellious childhood. At 16, Shelley ran off with her father’s married friend Percy Shelley. Shortly after, she suffered a stillborn birth and was widowed after the death of her husband. The themes isolation, loss, lack of love, and rebellion are all conveyed throughout the novel, “Frankenstein”.

“I thought that the ‘Frankenstein’ exhibit was great and very informative about Mary Shelley and her family and her life journey,” said Jose Miranda, a Lehman English major.

‘Blunt Talk’ Sparks Conversation on Marijuana Use among CUNY Students

By Thairy Pontier Lantigua



**“Blunt Talk” by Department of Wellness Education & Health Promotion Program at Lehman College, Nov. 29, 2018.
Photo by Thairy Pontier Lantigua.**

“Marijuana doesn’t make me stupid. It makes me more functional and creative. I am passing all my classes with As and it puts me in a good mood,” said Lehman student Jenny Soto, 56, who smokes marijuana and denies it has any negative effects.

Soto was one of the Lehman students who participated in “Blunt Talk,” an open discussion organized by the Department of Wellness Education and Health Promotion Program as part of a series of talks regarding drug and alcohol use. The purpose of the event

held on Nov. 29, 2018, was to help students make better choices about their health and well-being.

Speakers Erica Diaz, a wellness coach, and Ashmini Hiralall, a college prevention coordinator of the Wellness Education and Health Promotion Program, talked about the origins of cannabis and its history in the United States. During the conference, students were given the opportunity to discuss their opinions about marijuana, ask questions, and learn about the long and short-term effects of its use.

As the legalization of marijuana increases in the United States, so does the rate of consumption. A survey conducted by Marist College reports that nearly 55 million people, or 22 percent of Americans, have consumed marijuana at least once or twice in the last year. According to the survey, close to 35 million are regular users or people who use marijuana at least once or twice a month.

New York City is among the highest marijuana-consuming areas in the United States. Approximately 77 tons

of cannabis are consumed each year, as found in a recent study conducted by Seedo. In May of 2018, police investigations found major racial disparities in marijuana arrests in the city. This prompted Mayor Bill de Blasio to “end unnecessary arrests.” In a recent New York Times article, “Cuomo Moves to Legalize Recreational Marijuana in New York Within Months” Vivian Wang says that Governor Andrew Cuomo now advocates for the legalization of marijuana as part of his 2019 agenda.

Users say it helps alleviate the symptoms of nausea, pain, migraines, anorexia, and other infirmities. In the case of medicinal marijuana, the level of THC can be controlled. Students at the Blunt Talk event argued that there would be a significant decrease in the number of

marijuana arrests and higher revenue if cannabis was officially legalized in New York as a recreational drug. However, others felt that legalizing marijuana would have dangerous effects.

“I gave seven years of my life to weed and it was a mistake. I don’t think weed should be legalized because it is a drug that is addictive and can be detrimental in the long run, leaving the user in a process de-escalation and distraction from reality,” said Hostos Community College student, Cesar Lantigua, 23. Lantigua attended the conference to do research for an independent project and explained that he found it very difficult to quit. “When I decided to stop, things got real. I couldn’t sleep well, I was mad most of the time. My body needed it at times. I was sweaty all the time, and I

was anxious most of the time at work.”

Web pages, such as healthline.com and drugabuse.gov write that once individuals stop using the drug, they can experience withdrawal symptoms that include anxiety, sweating, diminished appetite, mood changes, irritability, insomnia and headaches.

“I think we need to understand that people are doing more and more on a daily basis, but it doesn’t mean that people can’t be addicted to it,” said 19-year-old, Hostos Community College student, Erick De La Rosa. “It’s a good thing that colleges are informing more students about it, I wish they did it at my school too so that people can know the pros and cons of it and make their choices.”

Lehman Students Protest Proposed MTA Fare Hike

By Felicha Stevens



Photo by Felicha Stevens.

The MTA could potentially increase the current \$2.75 bus and subway fare to \$3.00 in March 2019. CUNY students, community members, local riders and transit workers spoke out against the hike at numerous town hall meetings throughout the tristate area.

At the MTA’s public hearing at Hostos Community College, several CUNY students confronted the agency’s board members about the approved fare hike.

“I take the bus to school every day for \$2.75. I refill my card weekly because it ends extremely fast,” said Crystal Dennis, 18, a freshman biology major who takes the 55 and 20 buses from Mount Vernon, NY. “To tell the truth,

\$3.00 will end faster, I will have to refill [my card] constantly.”

The last MTA fare hike, implemented in March 2017, priced an unlimited 30-day metro card at \$121.00. The newly proposed fare will increase this price by 4 percent to \$126.25. According to data released by Georgetown University Center for Education and Workplace, the fare increase will financially impact college students, 25% of whom nationwide are both full-time students and employees.

“I don’t really have a luxurious income that I can use to afford MTA transportation fares of this kind. I rely on my parents, who are already

struggling with their many bills and expenses, such as rent, light, and food. The fare increase will hurt all of us long-term,” said Moussa Payinkay, Lehman senior and biology major.

Sasha Murphy, a case manager at a Bronx shelter said, “These fare hikes are not bettering our community. We have people who are struggling every day because rents are going up, our wages are staying stagnant and now the MTA will increase fares even more. How can people meet basic needs while already struggling to sustain themselves?”

Murphy is an advocate of NYC Swipe it Forward, a campaign started by

activists, such as Black Youth Project 100, New York Chapter and Police Reform Organizing Project, which challenges New Yorkers to swipe strangers on the subway using their unlimited MetroCards. The campaign not only helps reduce the amount of summons for turnpike jumps but helps people who cannot afford to ride the train.

Many students also object to paying more for deplorable service. Train delays caused by major incidents such as signal problems, medical emergencies and train track issues are getting worse. Data from the Subway Performance Dashboard shows a total of 24 signal

problems and 11 track malfunctions in November 2018.

Kimberlin Ballard, a Lehman junior and political science major who rides the D train to and from work is frustrated with the delays. “Trains are still delayed, everybody is late for their job or school. I just feel like this money is not going to a greater cause.”

She is even more frustrated that she will have to pay more for a decaying system. “It is money out of my pocket. I don’t get free metro cards instead I pay more money to commute to school. It affects me financially because I also have to pay for my books.”



The iconic MTA Metrocard. Photo courtest of Flickr.