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### Bronx Residents and Lehman Students Criticize Kanye's Pro-Trump Tweets



Kanye West performing at the Museum of Modern Art. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. [Page 3]



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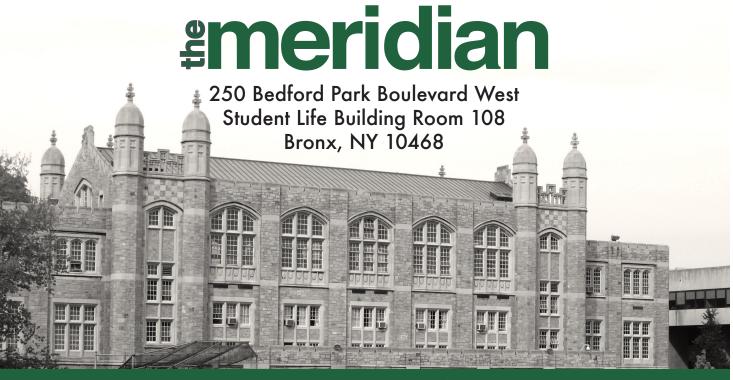
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## Bronx Residents and Lehman Students Criticize Kanye's Pro-Trump Tweets

#### By Jorel Lonesome



Kanye West at Lollapalooza Chile in 2011. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

"People viewed Kanye West as an outspoken visionary who rapped about racial issues in his songs, but he has done a complete three-sixty and turned into an ignorant sell out," says Qianna Stratton, 30, Bronx resident and paraprofessional at P.S. 134 in Hollis, NY. Stratton along with many other Bronx residents objects to the 40-year-old rapper and producer's recent provocative statements that caused a popular uproar.

On April 25, West tweeted a photo of himself wearing a Donald-Trump-signed "Make America Great Again" hat alongside hip-hop music industry executive Lyor Cohen and the CEO of Universal, Lucian Grainge. West expressed his love for Trump in a series of tweets stating that he considers Trump "his brother." West then tweeted about "free thought," stating that he does not

always necessarily agree with everything people do. "That's what makes us individuals," he said, "and we have the right to independent thought."

Four days prior, West had tweeted his admiration of Candace Owens, a black activist and Trump supporter who believes black people have been brainwashed by the media to vote for democrats. "I love the way Candace Owens thinks," West tweeted. The rapper also debated Hot 97's Ebro Darden for 30 minutes, and continued expressing his support for Owens. A week later, in a TMZ interview on May 1, West told his interviewer, "when you hear about slavery for 400 years...for 400 years? That sounds like a choice."

Since Kanye West's seventh studio album in 2016, "The Life of Pablo," little news

had been centered around the celebrity until the Pro-Trump issue started. West's upcoming album, titled "Love Everyone," is currently set to be released on June 1, 2018, and many Bronx residents believe West will say anything controversial for media attention to stay relevant.

"He acts and what he does is an act. He feeds off controversy and likes the publicity," said Ryan Esquivel, Bronx resident and program coordinator for The Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health at NYU.

Some Lehman students think West's mental breakdown during his career has affected his opinions. "Kanye has a lot of problems, said Sadou, inventory specialist at Best Buy, and student at Lehman. "I think it all began from the loss of his mother, which he can't get

over, and I think his opioid addiction and the people he hangs with has affected his thought process," he continued. "Kanye is causing uproars on Twitter to promote his next album, but he doesn't need to tweet by the minute about his love for Trump to get attention."

West's pro-Trump support has received backlash from African-American communities because the president has made racially charged comments and is associated with anti-black policies which have been documented for years.

In a New York Times article "Donald Trump's Racism: The Definitive List," from Jan. 15, 2018, David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick compiled racist remarks Trump made publicly. They state that "Trump treated black employees at his casinos differently from whites, according to multiple sources. A former hotel executive said Trump criticized a black accountant, saying "Black guys counting my money! I hate it. ... I think that the guy is lazy. And it's probably not his fault, because laziness is a trait in blacks."

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- Qianna Stratton, 30, Bronx resident and paraprofessional at P.S. 134 in Hollis, NY

The article also states that according to the federal government, Trump's realestate company tried to avoid renting apartments to African-Americans in the 1970s and gave preferential treatment to whites. "Supporting Trump implies you agree with the things he's done," said Anna Spencer, 28, security guard at Allied Barton. "Kanye's appreciation for Trump shows that he doesn't care for the racist things Trump has said about African Americans during his career as a businessman and politician."

Anaïs Marcelo, Bronx resident and store associate at Modell's Sporting Goods in Pelham, NY, dislikes West. "With so many people saying his writing and producing is excellent, this is probably true. I don't care for his style of music, and his public persona rubs me the wrong way," she said.

"I think Kanye is an interesting artist," said Lloyd Richards, Jr., music counselor and student at Lehman. "I don't believe in what he said in terms of slavery being a choice on TMZ. I think he wants attention leading up to his album. He makes good music, but I just don't agree with the things he says. Everyone has the right to his opinion, but Kanye does not state the facts about history."

## Lehman Food Bank Expands from Energy Bars to Seven Tons of Food

#### By Leonel Henriquez

"To be clear, this is Suzette's baby," says Assistant Director of Campus Life (CL) David Charcape of CL's Associate Director Suzette Ramsundar. The program Ramsundar fostered is the Lehman Food Bank. "She has done a lot to make this program a success," Charcape said.

As Ramsundar tells it, the idea came to her at work. Hungry students would stop by her office and ask if she had any snacks, especially in the afternoons and evenings. She started keeping energy bars and other snacks in the cubby above her desk to give to anyone who asked. From these seeds, the food bank was born.

"The most difficult part was at the beginning," Ramsundar says of the struggle to get the program up and running. "Getting funding and then actually purchasing food to give out. We would get goods from the N.Y. Food Bank, BJ's, Cosco and even the Morton William's supermarket on Kingsbridge when we ran out of stuff."

The food bank celebrated its one-year anniversary on March 29. It runs on a volunteer staff of three and is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in room 120 of the Student Life Building. It is only for students and currently serves about 40 appointments per week.

"We serve students by appointment after they make one online at lehmanfoodbank.setmore.com" says senior Shovaine V. Singh, the Food Bank Student Coordinator. "They



From left to right: Shovaine Singh, Student Coordinator for Lehman Food Bank; David Charcape, Assistant Director of Campus Life; Suzette Ramsundar, Associate Director of Campus Life and Coordinator of the H.H.L. Leadership Development Center; Lilian Yang, Graduate Assistant of the H.H.L. Leadership Development Center. Photo by Leonel Henriquez.

schedule their own private fifteenminute appointment. We want students to feel secure in a no-judgment zone."

Lehman alum Dr. Christopher Emdin says, "It is difficult for students to think about doing homework when they are hungry and concerned that they have little or no food at home." This concern is double in the case of adult students at Lehman.

"When you consider that adult students around age 27 have their own family and have to consider feeding their children as well, time at school means Goya, reached out and secured a pledge time not working," says Singh. "So it creates a difficulty for students to study when they have this concern on their minds that they have hungry children at home."

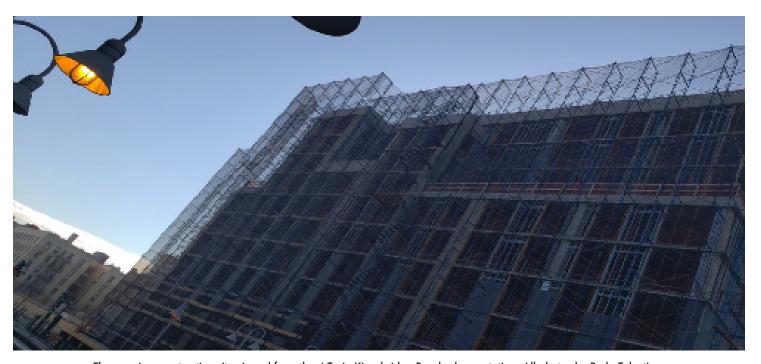
The recent purchase of a refrigerator allows the pantry to expand beyond canned goods and dry items. It now keeps some perishables, as well as fruits and vegetables, most of which come from a partnership with Corbin Hills to supply fresh locally-grown produce. Lehman alum Carlos Ortiz, now with

of a 14,000 pound food donation.

The food bank also provides recipes for the food items donated, as well as caloric information, nutritional value and portion size. It is also looking to hold culinary workshops. "We want every student who needs help to feel that they are welcome. Any student can get food, no questions asked," says Ramsundar. "More importantly any one can donate as well and help a fellow student."

## Locals Fear New Kingsbridge Development Spells Gentrification

#### By Perla Tolentino



The ongoing construction site viewed from the 4 Train Kingsbridge Road subway station. All photos by Perla Tolentino.

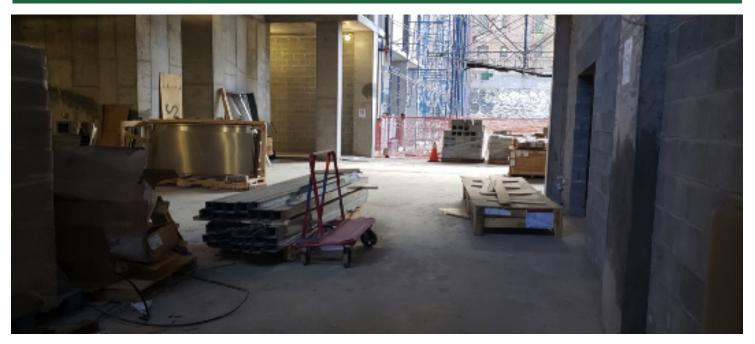
Kingsbridge residents see a construction site at Jerome Ave and West 196th Street as one more sign of encroaching gentrification. According to a January article in The Real Deal New York Real Estate News, the project's mastermind, Alan Bell, has reserved 40 of the apartments in the Kingsbridge project for the homeless. But locals fear they will end up priced out of both the building and the neighborhood, since the ongoing construction is close to the Kingsbridge armory renovation which is expected to send rents soaring.

"When in one of the poorest counties of NY you begin to see sudden construction of buildings of such high price, you know the gentrification phenomena has already begun," said Leonor Santana, a Lehman senior and business administration major. She believes that rents will end up being so high that only wealthy people will be able to afford to live here.

Official sources tell a different story. A spokesperson at C+C Apartment Management LLC, (one of contacts listed outside the construction told the Meridian that all applications will be processed by Housing Connect under a lottery. The spokesperson confirmed rent prices for only low-income families which represent the 60 percent of the area median income and moderateincome families which represent 90 percent of area median income in New York. For the low-income, C+C Management confirmed, \$860 for a studio apartment, \$923 for one bedroom, \$1,114 for two bedroom and

gentrification is occurring and that local \$1,281 for a three bedroom apartment. For the moderate-income, confirmed rent prices are, \$1,305 for a studio apartment, \$1,399 for one bedroom, \$1,686 for bedroom two \$1,940 for a three bedroom. C+C Management referred clients the NYC Housing Preservation & Development website to understand their income types and qualifications before applying. They also said a 17-car parking garage will also be built.

> According to a Jan 2016 article by New York YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard), 30 percent of the apartments will be for homeless tenants, 55 percent for lowincome families and the remaining fifteen percent for middle-income families with annual incomes ranging from \$51,780 to \$71,760. However, this range is significantly higher than the median income of Bronx residents as a whole,



An inside look at the construction of the building that will hold 137 apartments and a parking lot located under the Kingsbridge Road train station.

US Census Bureau data.

Research by The Furman Center, in collaboration with the NYU School of Law and Wagner School of Public Service, shows that Kingsbridge has seen a gradual increase in rent over the past 12 years, from \$1,093 in 2006, to \$1450 in 2017 of median gross rent, compared to Bronx rents overall between \$1,600 and \$2,800 citywide. The research also revealed that in 2016, 37.5 percent of tenants had to spend more than 50 percent of household income only on rent, and that only 6.4 percent of Kingsbridge Heights/Bedford residents own their own homes. This data indicates how the vast majority of locals in this community depend on affordable housing and suggests that apartments in the new Kingsbridge project may not be within reach of many.

Mabel Rojas, a processor for the Department of Buildings, told the Meridian that while the project is "definitely residential," apartment units, she is "not sure if [it is] low income because the owners are private, but they might sell to the city after." [Full disclosure: Rojas is the sister of the managng editor.] Rojas also said that the 13-story building is mixed use

which was \$35,302 in 2016 according to so the ground floor will be used for business. "They paid over 40k to the city in fees, but the overall cost is not yet determined" Rojas added.

> Lehman students' biggest concern is how long apartments in this building will stay "affordable," and many told the Meridian that they doubt they will be. They also believe the project is another sign of the gentrification occurring throughout many Bronx communities.

#### "Only rich people will be able to pay that kind of rent if they construct the ice rink."

#### - Bryan Diaz, Lehman computer science major and **Bronx** resident

Bryan Diaz, a Lehman Computer Science major student who has lived in the Bronx for the past eight years, is convinced that the project is lucrefocused only. Like many locals, he believes developers are trying to cash in on the renovation of the Kingsbridge

Armory, which is expected to bring more business to the area. "Knowing what is about to happen to the armory, they know constructing a building for rich people is more suitable," he said. "They know only rich people will be able to pay that kind of rent if they construct the ice rink."

According to a March report by Norwood News, the Kingsbridge Armory will begin its long-delayed transformation between November 2018 and January 2019. Bell told Norwood News that the Kingsbridge apartment building has little to do with the armory project. The Real Deal New York Real Estate News also states that in 2010 Bell left the Hudson Company Inc., a market-rate development company he founded in 1986, to found a new affordable housing company named B&B Urban. However, Bell has not yet mentioned having an action plan to block the increase of rent in the area, if the armory project actually happens.

While it is impossible to foresee its impact for sure, many Lehman students remain pessimistic. Diaz believes that developers will transform the area by building hotels catering to future tourists. "Kingsbridge will become a totally different neighborhood," he predicted.

## Lehman Students Fear Their Rent Will Triple if HUD Bill Passes

#### By Juan Vasquez



Ben Carson during his 2016 Presidential Election. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

A new bill from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calls for a threefold increase in rent for Americans least able to pay. Ben Carson, the Secretary of HUD, presented the bill on April 25. If passed, it will affect fifteen percent of people living in federally subsidized housing, according to the Washington Post. The paper also stated that Carson suggested changes in housing law that would make it easier for housing authorities to create work requirements that tenants be employed to receive such benefits. The proposal has some Lehman students worried it will hurt them or their peers and families if it becomes law.

"I believe that raising the rent will limit the chance of students trying to graduate," says Steven Gonzalez, a psychology major at Lehman. "I know quite a few people that have to take breaks just so they can focus on their jobs in order to pay for the classes they need, not mentioning the bills that they pay for housing."

English major Rhue Alice, a senior, told the Meridian "a lot of [students] would lose housing, and have to scramble for alternative living arrangements. I know a few people who in the past have had to drop out of school in order to work so they could live somewhere."

According to the 2017 NYCHA Fact Sheet, over 204,000 Bronx residents rely on subsidized housing. And while rent under subsidized housing is capped at 30 percent of the household's income, only 47 percent of those households actually earn income. This means that

"A lot of [students] would lose housing, and have to scramble for alternative living arrangements."

#### - Rhue Alice, Lehman English major

if any sort of rent increase were to come into place, more than half of those living in subsidized housing would not be able to afford to live in their homes. This bill has not yet reached the Senate.

"If there is a need to gain more money, taking it from the those considered working class is a terrible idea," computer science major Adrian Moore remarked. He also stated that "such a change would without a doubt affect the tenants who would have to work under a new system like that."

#### 'A Quiet Place' Makes Noise in the Box Office

#### By Francis Merencillo



Film poster for "A Quiet Place." Photo courtest of Wikipedia.

"A Quiet Place" is truly an astounding film, and definitely a must watch on your Saturday night movie list. It takes place in a post-apocalyptic world infested by monsters that rely on sound to hunt their prey. A catchphrase in the trailer was, "if they can't hear you, they can't hunt you."

Aside from the breath-holding thrill that it

provides as blind creatures hunt an aboutto-give-birth Evelyn Abbot (Emily Blunt), the movie also tackles issues that modern families face today.

Central to these is the theme of grief, as the Abbot family deals with the death of one of their youngest children, Beau Abbot (Cade Woodward), who becomes a victim of the eyeless monsters that hunt humans. The film also shows the struggles that parents have with their children, and vice versa, where communication is difficult within the world of silence the Abbot family must live in to survive.

Although "A Quiet Place" had an estimated budget of \$17 million which is considerably less than an average movie production, the film earned more than \$50 million during its opening weekend in the U.S alone.

Director John Krasinski told Variety Magazine, "Honestly, that was mostly due to the insane amount of talent we had on our crew. We had an A-level group from top to bottom."

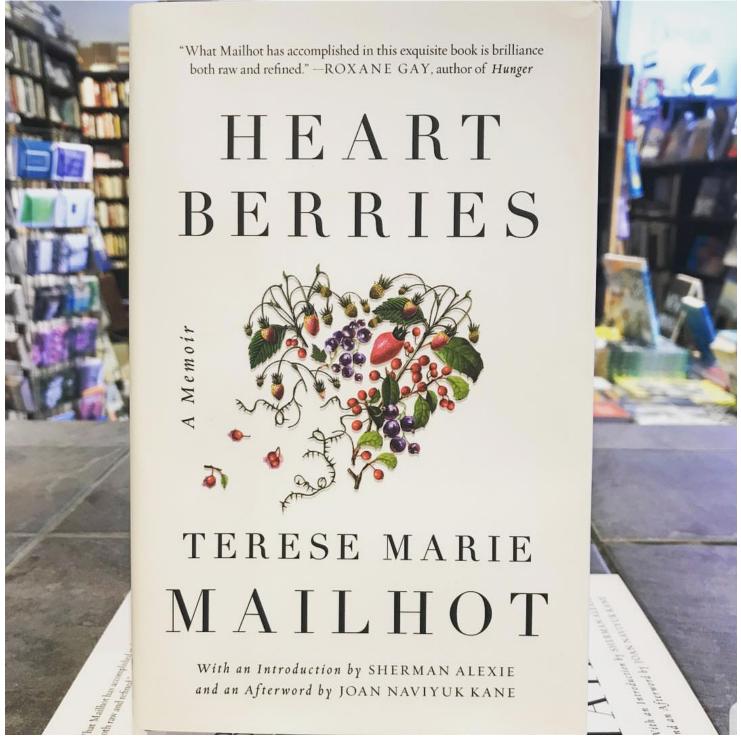
The movie stars real life Hollywood couple John Krasinski and Emily Blunt as Lee and Evelyn Abbot, alongside Millicent Simmonds and Noah Jupe who play their children. Simmonds, who plays Regan Abbot, their deaf and headstrong daughter is deaf in real life. Krasinski said, "I found myself asking her all the time 'is this right?' and she would be like 'maybe do it more like this?' She was not intimidated at all."

Because the film is silent a majority of the time, "A Quiet Place" relies on ASL (American Sign Language) for most of its dialogue — and the cast had to learn it.

Simmonds told Now This News how her role made an impact in the deaf community. She hoped the story would inspire other directors to be more creative in their works and include not only deaf talents, but also other disabled actors as well. As an advocate for the deaf community, Simmonds wants to inspire individuals like herself, and show them that they can be whatever they aspire to be and, through perseverance, can achieve anything.

## First Nation Author Maps Her Path to Healing

By Mohammad T. Khan



Canadian author Terese Marie "Heart Berries" Mailhot's memoir, explores intersecting themes of family dysfunction, mental illness, maternal and erotic love, healing, and identity. The book powerfully shows how devastating abuse is across generations.

Raised on the Sea Bird Island Indian Reservation, Mailhot says her words are "too wrong and ugly to speak," yet she balances brutal candor with poetic In her writing, Mailhot effectively detail, especially in describing her love affair and eventual marriage to Casey, a creative writing professor and father of her third child.

Mailhot links intergenerational family dysfunction to the socially marginalized status of Indians. At turns troubled, intimate, empowered, defiant, and poetic, Mailhot's non-linear account uses memory as a means of coming to terms with her own trauma and her identity as a woman and writer whose life has been haunted by the foreboding sense that "Indian women die early."

The honest and affecting memoir recounts her coming of age, marriages and recovery from trauma. Mailhot marries at a very young age as the only means of escaping a legacy of abuse and crushing poverty, having aged out of the foster care system. She has two sons with her first husband, but her eldest son is taken away from her because of her mental illness. Mailhot moves to El Paso with her younger son, gets a GED and goes to college. There she begins an affair with creative writing professor Casey, who then withdraws from her mania and what seems to him excessive demands. When they break up, Mailhot ends up in a hospital.

In the hospital, Mailhot is told that she has post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar II, and an eating disorder. Writing is offered there as a form of therapy, and she begins writing to Casey, which becomes part of the memoir. Although Casey is not committed to Mailhot, they resume their sexual relationship and she becomes pregnant. When she eventually marries Casey, the challenges of intimacy arouse memories of being sexually assaulted by her father, a trauma Mailhot understands she must confront.

describes intergenerational dysfunction namely her neglectful mother and abusive alcoholic and abandoning father — and its impact. "None of us attended school frequently," she writes

"I inherited black eyes and a grand, regal grief that your white women won't own or carry. I don't think you know how I felt, and I wondered what my grief looked like to you?"

#### - Teresa Marie Mailhot, "Heart Berries"

of herself and her siblings. "All of us had substance abuse problems, which are still welcome over the very sober pain of remembering." Her father's abuse leads Mailhot to mistrust her partners.

Her mother is loving but often neglectful.

Mailhot describes how her mother once "lost" her while shopping, leaving her "accidentally locked in a bathroom stall in pitch black," after an employee cleans and locks it when the shop closes.

Far more destabilizing, her mother leaves Mailhot and her siblings for periods of up to three weeks, causing Mailhot to be put in foster care. The abandonment leaves her insecure, and she carries this legacy of her parents' abusive and neglectful behavior into her own life and pays a steep price for it.

Mailhot also never loses sight of what it means to be an Indian in a white world. Nowhere is this collision more apparent than in her relationship with Casey: "White women have always made me feel inferior, but I don't think you know how much. All you see is me killing ladybugs, or crying, or asking you what I did. You can't know the spite of my feelings." Mailhot sees judgment in Casey's eyes: she's brutal, she's crazy, she's the other. She struggles with feelings of inferiority, yet she also recognizes her worth as an Indian woman: "I inherited black eyes and a grand, regal grief that your white women won't own or carry. I don't think you know how I felt, and I wondered what my grief looked like to you?" This paradox is central to the memoir. Mailhot does not flinch from exposing her feelings of intense vulnerability and anger.

The heart berries of the title refer to healing lore in Native American culture and offer crucial hope. There is much illness and pain in the book, and everyone needs a healer, most of all Mailhot. "I knew I was not well. I thought of the first healer, who was just a boy. My friend Denise told me the story. She called him Heart Berry Boy, or O'dimin." The title reflects the themes of illness and healing that run through the whole memoir, suggesting the possibility of healing for its author, and for First Nation people.

#### Lehman's First Singles Mixer Draws Enthusiastic Crowd

#### By Shaiann Frazier

The line leading into the Faculty Dining Hall of the Music Building stretched around the hallway as students waited with curious faces, hesitant smiles, and much excitement for the Singles Mixer Event to begin on Wednesday May 9. "I saw the flyers and I was thinking it would be great to meet new people and get to know the people around campus," said Efren Vaquero, 20, a double major in computer science and graphic design. Vaquero added she was "looking for more friendships and connections. I'm not seeking relationships."

The Single Mixers event was sponsored by the Lehman Wellness Center and the Student Government Association. Its purpose was not only to bring singles together but to also make new friends and break down the barrier of first encounters and impressions.

"It was just an idea that sparked in my head about people on campus who are single and need to find someone," explained Sheridan Dunne, 28, a P.E.E.R. Educator for the Lehman Wellness Center, which helps students foster healthy and balanced lifestyles. "Especially students who are always complaining about not having friends, which helps with that by putting all these people together that share at least one thing in common," Dunne added.

"We were only expecting 60 people because we didn't know if people were going to be interested in something like that because it's never been done on campus before," said Nikita Shetty, 23, a coordinator of wellness education and health promotion at the center. "And then we got 207 people who showed up, but we had to turn away people because we didn't have any more seats available."

Once each attendee reached the sign-

and goodie bag filled with condoms, candy, flyers related to health education awareness, and a raffle ticket. Participants were free to sit anywhere, with each table having four seats, two post-it notes which read "Stay," and 20 questions meant for breaking the ice with someone you were meeting for the first time.

Scheduled to begin at three, the event started late due to the unexpectedly large turnout. But once everyone was seated, discussions opened about what to expect on a first date, bringing your own money during a date, and who should pay. The conversation became very heated and decisions were split over who would pay

After this, the mixing began. Those seated near a post-it that read "Stay" had to remain sitting, while those who weren't had to find someone to mingle with. They then had two minutes to talk. When the time was up, the original seated person would go to a new table and mingle with someone else. The mingling stopped when a person made it across the entire room and managed to talk to almost everyone.

If an individual had found someone who peaked their interest, they had the option of exchanging numbers, with blank cards left on the table for that purpose. Dimitrios Lefas, 21, an English major, said, "I only got one number. And the process of getting the number wasn't scary or hard."

Kenya McDonald, 21, a business and marketing major, said she felt the energy in the room. "I could feel how eager a lot of guys were based off of them being extra enthusiastic." McDonald added, "It's just a vibe I picked up, to be honest."

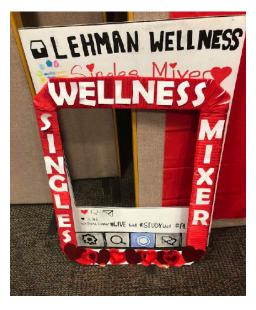
Some students claimed their presence was in table, they were a given a number unintentional. Christina Johnson, 20, a

social work major said it was an accident that she came to the event. "But now I'm hoping to meet new people and I guess mingle," she said, "even if it's not guys."

Lehman physical therapy major James Morgan, 25, also said he was there by accident. "It's more so that I was really hungry, so that's what got me here," he explained. However, he said he doesn't have a problem with talking to people, and that "dating people in college is the best, it's pretty dope."

The three-hour event ended with dinner, music and a raffle in which some participants won water bottles and sweatshirts. By this time, the uncertain faces had been replaced with laughter and smiles.

Ferdinand Essizewa, 20, a nursing major, was one of those smiling. He said he enjoyed the discussion because he got to see different points of view which made socializing easier. "I got one number which was really easy because I'm a charismatic person which helped a lot."



A Single Mixer's picture frame made by coordinators of the event that attendees could take pictures with. Photo by Shaiann Frazier.