

JAMAICA

Queens Library workers and elected officials rallied yesterday against a plan to slash more than \$25 million from the library's budget.

More than 200 workers, members of the Queens Library Guild Local 1321, have received layoff notices. The proposed cuts would also reduce services and branch hours throughout the borough. The rally was held at the Central Library in Jamaica.

The Bloomberg administration and the City Council are currently in budget negotiations. Council members have said they will fight for more funding, but it is unclear whether all of the proposed cuts can be restored.

Lisa L. Colangelo

ASTORIA

A foundation that supports after-school programs will present its first performing arts showcase today at the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts.

Among the acts will be the drumline team from Junior High School 8 in Jamaica and step poetry performances from Public School 116 in Jamaica.

The event, sponsored by the Sports & Arts in Schools Foundation, begins 7 p.m. at the school's Tony Bennett Concert Hall at 35-12 35th Ave.

Nicholas Hirshon

LONG ISLAND CITY

A Long Island City high school beat out about 900 other schools to place third at an annual business plan competition.

Four Newcomers High School students took home the third prize — and \$1,000 each — at the Junior Achievement of New York Business Plan Competition on June 2 in Times Square.

They conceived of a high-tech mobile device, called Little Angels, that would help family members stay in touch with young children while traveling. This was the first time the school had competed.

The first prize went to W.T. Clarke High School in Westbury, L.I. Second place went to Bronx High School of Science.

Clare Trapasso

QUEENS BUREAU
(718) 793-3328
queensnews@
NYDailyNews.com

QUEENS NEWS

MORE BIZ ON BLVD.

New group seeking to lure shoppers

BY LISA L. COLANGELO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A NEW GROUP focused on revitalizing Queens Blvd. in Sunnyside kicked off its agenda yesterday with some simple yet key goals — Shop local, buy local and free up some parking spaces.

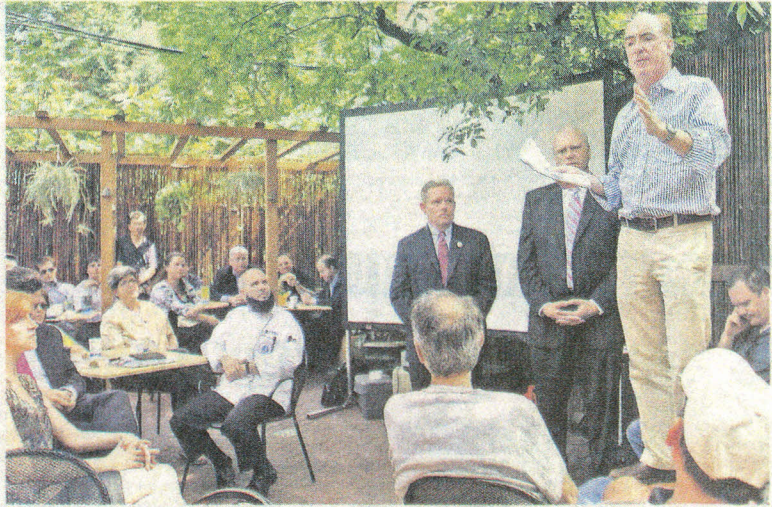
"How can we entice you to shop more in your community?" Ciaran Staunton asked a large gathering of residents, elected officials and property owners at his pub Molly Blooms on hand to launch the Queens Blvd. Merchants Initiative.

"We have 200,000 people who pass here every day going to and from Manhattan," he pointed out. "How do we get them to stop?"

Staunton, a local resident, has long pushed for a more attractive streetscape. That section of Queens Blvd. is pockmarked with empty storefronts, iron gates and shabby awnings.

He is hoping the grass-roots program, pairing property owners and community members, will help find resources and ideas to improve the area.

First on their list is lifting the parking restrictions on Queens Blvd., which bar cars from using the meters until 10 a.m.



Molly Blooms pub owner Ciaran Staunton addresses gathering at launch of Queens Blvd. Merchants Initiative, which aims to improve commercial atmosphere in Sunnyside and attract shoppers. Photo Jeanne Noonan

"By 9:30 a.m. or 10 a.m. traffic is not there to the degree that you need five lanes open," said Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-Queens/Bronx), who attended the event to show his support.

City Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer and a representative for state Sen. Michael Gianaris also promised to back the fledgling effort. Van Bramer said he is lobbying the city to change the parking rules.

While the mood was upbeat

yesterday, Staunton says he has received some resistance from members of the Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District and the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce. Critics have quietly said those organizations have been slow to address neighborhood problems.

Artie Weiner, the treasurer of Sunnyside Shines, sent out a blistering email to dozens of people saying the creation of the new merchants initiative was "divisive" and "self-serving."

Weiner could not be reached for comment yesterday, but Staunton shrugged off the criticism, noting the initiative is a collaboration with the chamber, the BID and community members.

Staunton said empty stores could be used for temporary uses such as art galleries as a way to attract other businesses.

"People will not rent a vacant store next to a vacant store," he said.

lcolangelo@nydailynews.com

Taking the 'Queens for a day' tourism challenge

BY NICHOLAS HIRSHON
DAILY NEWS WRITER

A QUEENS PROFESSOR hopes his students can help solve a riddle this summer that has confounded the borough's tourism experts for decades.

James Giordano will challenge his marketing class at LaGuardia Community College to devise plans to convince tourists who visit New York City to spend at least one day of their stay in Queens.

Giordano will forward the ideas to the Queens Economic Development Corp., which is slated to kick off its "75 Days of Summer" campaign today with help from Giordano's students.

"Instead of just using cases at the end of the chapter, we have a rich opportunity to go apply that in the field right in our backyards," Giordano said.

Students will also visit area hotels and hot spots, hoping to convince them to offer discounts that could attract even more tourists.



Wendy Trinidad and other students are eager to tackle tourism issue for Queens Economic Development Corp. Photo by Jeanne Noonan

Organizers are betting the students will offer fresh perspectives on pitching the borough to visitors through social media like Facebook and Twitter.

"Students are very enthusiastic," said Michelle Stoddart, tourism director for the Queens Economic Development Corp.

"They're learning, so we're all about educating them in their field."

Stoddart said the borough will also re-launch the Queens Tourism Council, a collective of cultural groups and sites that fell inactive in recent years.

It's an effort to capitalize on droves of tourists who fly into Queens airports and stay at local hotels but spend most of their time and money in Manhattan.

One of Giordano's former students, Wendy Trinidad, said she registered for his summer class because she enjoys the real-world experience.

"It's better to have the experience hands-on than to just read it," said Trinidad, 37, of Yonkers. "You learn from the books and you also apply it."

Giordano said he derives more joy from taking students into the real world than sticking to the classroom.

"It's more fun to teach the city as a classroom than just teach the textbook that maybe talks about places in Nebraska," he said.