

Belmont Business Improvement District Winter 2018 Newsletter



- Holiday Activities
- 2017 Review
- “My Arthur Avenue” Commercial
- 2018 Events

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

This holiday season kicked off with a tremendous start! On Saturday, December 2nd, the Belmont BID hosted its annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Thanks to the hard work of our Executive Director Phil Marino and Assistant Director Alyssa Tucker, nearly 1,000 attendees came to the joyful ceremony held at Ciccarone Park on one of the “great streets of America” – Arthur Avenue. With donations from our sponsors Artuso Pastry, Cerini Coffee & Gifts, and Madonia Bakery, attendees enjoyed 90 pounds of scrumptious Italian cookies and rich hot chocolate as Christmas tunes filled the air! The BID was also proud to partner with Love Holds Life, which donated more than 500 toys that we were able to distribute to delighted children and their families. Santa Claus listened to children’s wishes and smiled brightly for pictures. The Jolly Holidays, an a capella group performed classic holiday carols and Geoffrey the Toys”R”Us Giraffe epitomized the fun and nostalgia of the day. Before the evening came to a close, the countdown to light our twenty-foot Christmas tree was cheered from the crowds and right before everyone’s eyes the dazzling lights were switched on. The BID would like to thank everyone who participated in making this event such a special occasion. The BID is always appreciative of the dedication and forward thinking of Councilman Torres, the hard work of Captain Andrew Brown and the 48th Precinct, the Parks Department, and our gracious sponsors for enabling us to host such a memorable event. This year the ceremony had an extra special sense of joy and festiveness and we hope we are able to build on this throughout the years.



Holiday Activities



Shortly after Thanksgiving, our holiday lighting throughout the district was switched on. The custom made “Welcome to Little Italy” signs and illuminated snowflakes shined brighter than ever. Santa Claus came to town the weekends leading up to Christmas to bring joy to our shoppers and visitors. He happily handed out candy canes and posed for pictures. The Jolly Holidays, an a capella group, also returned to the neighborhood for a record 13 times this season. They caroled their way down our busy streets as our visitors shopped and dined.

Annual Meeting

On Friday, January 5th, the BID held its annual meeting. The meeting allows the BID to review the year, share plans for the upcoming year, share our annual report and financial audit, answer any questions, and most importantly, hold the elections for our board of directors. The board is now comprised of: Anthony Artuso, Celeste Calabro, Joseph Clarke, John Colangelo, Scott Frankland, Frank Franz, Reinaldo Garcia, Richard Liberatore, Peter Madonia, David Rose, and Edward Teitel. Angelos Kontos represents the Mayor’s Office and Small Business Services, Miriam Gonzalez represents the Comptroller’s Office, Rafael



Roger represents the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, and Ashley Torres represents the Office of Councilman Torres. Peter Madonia, Richard Liberatore, Frank Franz, and Celeste Calabro serve as the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively.

Year In Review

Events

2017 was quite an exciting and productive year for the BID! Our Ferragosto festival saw approximately 28,000 attendees from the tri-state area and beyond. Everyone wanted to be a part of our annual celebration that includes Italian culture, live entertainment and of course, the greatest food anywhere. We are already looking forward to inviting everyone back for Ferragosto 2018! We continued our participation in the DOT Weekend Walks program, which included our Health Fair, Art Show, Jazz Saturdays, Blue Knights Motorcycle Run, and Columbus Day Celebration. We were also able to sponsor special events throughout the year like Italian Heritage Month with Bronx Borough President Diaz, and Turkeys for Thanksgiving with Councilman Torres. We were also fortunate enough to partner with Councilman Torres, Bronx Parent Housing Network, and the Red Cross, in collecting donations for the families displaced by the horrific fire that took place on Prospect Avenue in late December.



My Arthur Avenue Commercial

One of the biggest highlights of the year definitely had to be when our “My Arthur Avenue” commercial premiered in the fall. We took on the assignment of capturing the spirit and essence of the neighborhood and exhibiting it into a 30 second commercial. The commercial successfully exemplifies the idea of developing a personal relationship with the neighborhood and its vibrant sense of community. The commercial later even won GOLD in the Video/Audio category for the MarCom Awards. It is our hope that individual businesses will build off the theme, and tag line, to highlight their individual artisanal goods and products. We also plan on airing the commercial again this winter to audiences in different areas than we had first targeted.



A Bronx Tale Mural

As you are certainly aware, this year also saw the completion of our very first BID sponsored mural. The mural was painted on the strategic corner of Hughes Avenue and Fordham Road. The location was chosen for its high visibility and grand scale. A portion of the mural is a celebration of “A Bronx Tale” by Belmont’s own Chazz Palminteri. The artist, Mike A., was also able to seamlessly incorporate his own signature design elements of fruits and vegetables. It is our hope that this will go on to inspire additional attractive murals within the Belmont neighborhood.

Attracting Quality Businesses to the Neighborhood

A goal of the BID this past year was to begin work on filling the vacancies within the district with quality businesses. To attract these businesses, our landlord committee has worked with marketing firm, JGSC Group. JGSC Group conducted a shopper demographic survey and a pedestrian count survey. With this data, marketing materials were created and will be distributed to brokers and potential retail prospects. The BID also hopes to act as facilitators at future retail recruitment events.

A Safer Community

We were also able to work closely with the 48 Precinct and the District Attorney’s office to get harsher punishments and increased bails for the individuals who have been aggressively panhandling, tagging graffiti, and threatening the quality of life and the economic well-being of our business community.

Looking Ahead

Looking to the future, we will continue to develop the “Little Italy in the Bronx” brand and introduce new customers to our community, as well as entertain our current visitors. There are exciting events and opportunities this year that we are looking forward to that will help distinguish the neighborhood as the unique and authentic destination we all know it is.



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2018 Upcoming Events

Even with the year just beginning, we're already looking forward to our upcoming events. In partnership with SBH Health Systems, the spring will kick off with our Health Fair on Sunday, June 3rd. Attendees will have the chance to participate in free health screenings and fitness activities. We're enthusiastic about hosting summer lunch musical performances, happening every Friday in July and every Saturday in August from 12-3pm. Each date will feature an enjoyable genre of music to listen to while attendees have an opportunity to take a break from the hustle and bustle. On August 11th, we'll also welcome back the Blue Knights for their motorcycle run. Our much-loved, Ferragosto festival will be held on Sunday, September 9th this year and display the best of the neighborhood. Pizza Fest is currently set to be held Columbus Day weekend. The event will showcase the talents of the United States most renowned pizza makers as well as top pizza makers from Italy, and we are thrilled to be hosting such an exciting event. On Columbus Day, we will have music for visitors to enjoy as well as characters to mark the occasion. As tradition goes, the holiday season will kick off with our Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, December 1st in Ciccarone Park. Leading up to Christmas, we will welcome back Santa Claus and our carolers. 2018 will be nothing short of an exciting year, and we're looking forward to your feedback particularly as we embark on new events.

Have you been receiving e-mails from the BID? Every week we send out information regarding events, advertising initiatives, security reports , and other important information.

If you are not receiving these e-mails please e-mail atucker@bronxlittleitaly.com

and request to be added to our distribution list.