

Belmont Business Improvement District Winter 2019 Newsletter



Holiday Activities / Year in Review / Banner program

Wishing you a happy and healthy New Year!

Tree Lighting Ceremony



The holiday season kicked off to a tremendous start with our Tree Lighting Ceremony! On Saturday, December 1st, the Belmont BID hosted the beloved annual event. Thanks to the hard work of our Executive Director Phil Marino and Assistant Director Alyssa Tucker, nearly 1,000 attendees attended the joyful occasion 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, a children’s cancer foundation. Their organization collected nearly 1,000 toys

which we distributed to delighted children . The holiday fun was epitomized by Santa Claus as he listened to Christmas wishes and smiled brightly for pictures. The Jolly Holidays, an a capella group, performed classic holiday carols that certainly added to the nostalgia of the event. 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 is grateful to everyone who participated in making this event such a special occasion. We continue to be appreciative of the dedication and forward thinking of Councilman Torres, the hard work of Deputy Inspector Andrew Brown and the 48th Precinct, the Parks Department, and our gracious sponsors for enabling us to host such a memorable event. The event truly had an extra special sense of joy and festiveness this year that we hope we are able to build on throughout the years.



Holiday Activities

Right before 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 during 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 also returned to the neighborhood throughout the season, caroling their way down our busy streets and into businesses as customers shopped and dined.

Annual Meeting

On Friday, January 4th, the BID held its annual meeting. The meeting allows the BID to review the year, share plans for the upcoming year, distribute our 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 Borough President’s Office, and Romina Enea 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

2018 was quite a productive and eventful year in the district! Despite the rain, our Ferragosto festival still had a large, hungry crowd from the tristate area and beyond. The annual celebration included Italian culture, live entertainment, and of course, the greatest food anywhere. We are already looking forward to inviting everyone back for Ferragosto 2019! We continued our participation in the DOT Weekend Walks program, which included our Health Fair with SBH Health Systems, a Summer Concert Series which featured a different live band every weekend in July and August, and our Columbus Day Celebration that included a live musical performance and dressed up characters. A new event introduced this year was the New York Pizza Festival. The event brought 27 of the best pizzaioli from across the country, and even several from Naples, to our community to showcase their special talents. New York Pizza Festival was a great way to attract new customers. Approximately eight to ten thousand people attended the event, many first time visitors. They came to savor world-class pizza, but also to explore and shop in our unique, century old community. The neighborhood also received a substantial amount of publicity around the event. We were also happy to sponsor special events throughout the year like Italian Heritage Month with Bronx Borough President Diaz, a Back to School Giveaway and Turkeys for Thanksgiving with Councilman Torres, and Christmas events with the 48th Precinct as well as Community Board 6. The year came to a close with our own Tree Lighting Ceremony, as previously mentioned.



Little Italy in the Bronx Sauces

A big highlight of the year was reaching a contribution agreement with Summer Garden Food Manufacturing and launching a line of Little Italy in the Bronx Sauces. Revenue brought in from sales of the sauce will help the BID preserve and advance the traditions of our community. Thus far, the BID has received \$18,399 from sales of the sauce. However, what is most exciting is the opportunity to enhance and advance our brand beyond our region to a national audience. Summer Garden Foods has earmarked \$500,000 dollars in funds to market Little Italy in the Bronx and gain store placement. The sauce is available in nearly 4,000 stores nationwide and in Canada. I am excited to share that we are in talks to expand the product line to include a high-quality vinegar, gnocchi, and gourmet pastas. The expanded product line will add strength to the brand name, and help with customer recognition.



“My Arthur Avenue” Commercial

One of the ways we continue to promote our brand is through the “My Arthur Avenue” commercial. The commercial has aired several times in the Southern Westchester, Port Chester/Harrison, and Ossining geographic areas, and in the North & South Nassau County markets. The commercial campaign has been successful as it has increased traffic to our website during the campaign, and the areas where the commercial has aired have shown up in the top spots of geographic regions our website visitors are from. Along with promoting our brand, the BID continues to work diligently to protect it. The BID has had our IP lawyers send cease and desist letters to various businesses that have used our trademarked Little Italy in the Bronx logo illegally. We do this first and foremost to protect the brand and your businesses, but it is also legally required that we do so to protect the trademark, or we risk losing it. We will continue to take every step to preserve and protect it so that others can’t capitalize on it. If you see the logo being used outside of the district, please notify the BID Office.

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 keep our current visitors delighted. 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.



Belmont Business Improvement District
P.O. Box 580-203
Mt. Carmel Station
Bronx, NY 10458

Lamppost Banners in Belmont

For the fifth year in a row, the Belmont BID has placed branded lamppost banners throughout the district in order to increase awareness of the community, and to highlight the businesses who are vested here. The sponsors of the banners receive brand recognition and logo placement throughout the community. We're excited to share that thanks to our 23 sponsors, this year's banner program is our biggest yet!



2019 Upcoming Events

Even with the new year just beginning, we're already planning and looking forward to the year ahead. We plan to kick spring off with our Health Fair in partnership with SBH Health Systems. Attendees have the opportunity to participate in free health screenings and fun fitness activities. We're enthusiastic about hosting more summer concerts. Each date will feature a great live musical performance to enjoy as attendees take a break from the hustle and bustle of the neighborhood. Our annual Ferragosto festival will be held on Sunday, September 8th this year, and will continue to display the best of the neighborhood. New York Pizza Festival is set to take place in October and will showcase the talents of the most renowned pizza makers. We're also planning on marking Columbus Day in a special way this year. As tradition goes, the holiday season will officially start once our dazzling holiday light display is switched on, and our Tree Lighting Ceremony will occur on Saturday, December 7th in Ciccarone Park. Leading up to Christmas, we plan to welcome back Santa Claus and our carolers. We have these events and so much more to look forward to in 2019. We're certain the year will be nothing short of spectacular, and we're looking forward to sharing it with you, all in Bronx Little Italy!

Security Cameras

Over the past year we have strategically been increasing security camera coverage in the district. We now have cameras covering the municipal parking lot, and we've added cameras to cover significant portions of Hoffman St, Arthur Ave, and E Fordham Rd. We plan to expand our camera coverage in the coming years. Our recordings have been helpful to PD, as they have already used our footage several times for their investigations.