

# Belmont Business Improvement District Summer 2020 Newsletter



**BELMONT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**



## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Through this unprecedented time, the Belmont BID continues to provide our members with support, assistance, and resources. The BID has kept members informed on legal assistance and available support, and advised and helped with applications for financial assistance in the forms of federal and private loans and grants from the government, City agencies, and private organizations. We shared opportunities with organizations looking to partner with local eateries to help feed frontline workers. The BID has also kept members informed of New York's phased re-openings and industry specific guidelines, along with initiatives like the recent Open Restaurant Program.

Our commitment to keeping the neighborhood well-maintained and clean has been made more critical. At the start of the pandemic, for the well being of our employees and customers, the BID increased our sanitation protocols to include safely sanitizing high touch areas like meters and door handles. Our private security officers remained on patrol and encouraged social distancing. We partnered with Small Business Services at the opportunity to be able to distribute face masks to our members, and have already distributed over 20,000 masks! The BID also created an online neighborhood guide that allowed customers to reference what local businesses were open and/or offering supplemental services like curbside pickup and/or shipping.

Our website, [BronxLittleItaly.com](http://BronxLittleItaly.com), continues to be updated with resources as they become available and our business guide is updated as businesses reopen and/or expand their services. The BID office is still distributing masks to members, while supplies last, so please reach out if you are in need.

A cornerstone of the BID's service is its consistent outreach and assistance provided to our members. To continue our promotional efforts with customers, we manage multiple digital communication platforms including our website and social media channels. These resources highlight welcoming photos and current information from our various members that is easily accessible by the public. None of us know what is going to happen next, but we do know our century old community is resilient, a great place to be, and full of possibilities.



## Piazza Di Belmont

On July 9th, the Belmont BID was delighted to launch Piazza di Belmont, a glorious European-style outdoor dining experience. The BID wanted to implement this initiative as a way to best address and balance the needs of our retail and service stores while expanding seating capacity for our restaurants and eateries. This plan closes Arthur Avenue from East 188<sup>th</sup> Street to Crescent Avenue to vehicular traffic and parking from



6pm to 10pm on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and 1pm-9:30pm on Sundays. If successful, and participation is maintained, the initiative will continue Thursdays through Sundays until October 31st, and possibly even longer.

While the street is closed during Piazza di Belmont, a 15-foot lane must remain clear for emergency vehicles. Absolutely no cars will be allowed to enter the closed street, the clear lane must allow for visitors to walk and properly socially distance. Eateries may set up tables and chairs 6 feet apart in front of their storefront surrounded by 18" wide barricades. Tables may extend 12' into the street, up to the 15-foot emergency lane,

instead of 8' while the street is opened.

Prior to the street closure, the Belmont BID hung no parking signs to alert the public of the regulations. During the street closures, the BID will have security on patrol, and sanitation sweeping up litter. The BID will enhance the street by placing colorful signs on the sidewalk welcoming guests and encouraging them to follow public health guidelines. We will also be promoting Piazza di Belmont to our social media following of over a quarter of a million people. Our public relations firm, Nicholas & Lence Communications (NLC), also pitched the initiative to the press and it has already received a significant amount of coverage on television networks WPIX-TV, FOX 5 NY, WABC-TV, ABC7NY, NY1 and News 12 the Bronx, amongst additional publications, such as Gothamist, amNY, and Time Out New York.



Please keep in mind that through the City's Open Restaurant Program eateries are able to provide outdoor dining on the roadway daily. On Mondays through Wednesdays and when the street is not closed for Piazza di Belmont, the BID kindly requests that business owners and employees park on side streets, to ensure our customers get the most easily accessible parking.

Our community isn't complete without our eateries and we have been eagerly welcoming guests to Piazza di Belmont weekly. It has certainly brought back a tremendous amount of the livelihood that makes our neighborhood so charming. The Belmont BID is thankful to the New York Police Department, particularly the 48<sup>th</sup> Precinct, led by Captain Joseph Tompkins, and the Department of Transportation for their help, coordination and support of this initiative.



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## Little Italy in the Bronx Products

The Little Italy in the Bronx brand continues to grow. As the BID has shared, a portion of the proceeds from the products is donated to the BID to continue our efforts in the neighborhood. Our last contribution amount, for Q2 2020, was for \$20,635.80. That brings the FY20 total to \$59,105.40. These funds help the BID preserve and advance the traditions of our community. Our partner, Summer Garden Foods, has been busy presenting the Tuscan wheat pasta and gnocchi products to stores around the country in order to gain shelving space. It has been exciting to receive pictures of the products in stores, like the picture featured here, in Texas!



## 2020 Events

Due to the Mayor's Executive Order on cancelling street events through September 30th, Ferragosto 2020 has been cancelled. The Open Restaurant Program was recently extended to October 31st, allowing for al fresco dining to continue longer than originally announced. During the pandemic it was also decided that it was not the proper time to host or promote the New York Pizza Festival scheduled for October. At this time our Columbus Day Weekend Walk event is pending as is our Tree Lighting Ceremony. The BID remains in constant communication with the City regarding event rules and guidelines, and will update our members as we learn more.