

August 17, 2009

Cash where it's needed: Schools, parks, groups getting \$21M in crucial funding

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MORE THAN 40 Bronx schools, parks and cultural groups are getting a much needed boost where it counts the most.

Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. is doling out more than \$21 million in critical funding to the various organizations as part of his FY 2010 capital budget.

The funding will help renovate libraries, build playgrounds, create science labs and gymnasiums.

"There are a number of great organizations across the Bronx that are deserving," Diaz said, "I am proud that my office can play a major role in providing crucial funding."

Of the \$21 million allocated, 27% is for housing issues; 26% for education; 23% on parks, and the rest split among community centers, libraries, cultural groups and previous allocations.

The Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club is getting \$1.5 million for its planned West Bronx Center.

The funding is the final piece needed to complete construction on a project that's been a decade in the making, said Dan Quintero, the group's executive director.

Construction is to be completed by the end of September, with center officials hoping to open their doors to more than 1,500 youngsters by January.

Other major funding projects include: \$2.5 million to create a new tennis center for the Bronx Children's Museum; \$1.2 million to upgrade the security system at the Edenwald Houses; \$800,000 to Out2Play, a non-profit group that helps build playgrounds for disadvantaged public schools; and \$750,000 to the newly formed Ghetto Film school to buy lab computers and cameras.

To increase awareness of the services offered by Diaz's office, a public information desk (open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily) has been set up in the main floor of the Bronx County Building.

Diaz encouraged residents to use it to also obtain referrals concerning community programs.

He also has expanded the hours of his Constituent Appointment Office, formerly open to the public for non-emergency cases, to Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and 6 p.m. on Thursdays.