

WOODSIDE HERALD

SERVING SUNNYSIDE-WOODSIDE AND LONG ISLAND CITY

VOL. 88 NO.29

WOODSIDE, L.I.C., N.Y. FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2021

FREE

DIRTY FUEL POWER PLANT



NEEDS OPPOSITION BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

\$200 MILLION IN FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR JULY

It was announced this week that all New Yorkers enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will receive the maximum allowable level of food benefits for July. The agency is also working with the federal government to ensure this aid, which has brought in more than \$2.5 billion in food assistance to New Yorkers since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, will continue beyond July. "The pandemic exposed glaring inequalities in food access across the state and only made it harder for the many families who were already struggling with food insecurity," Governor Cuomo said. "By providing SNAP recipients with the maximum benefits possible, we are working to ensure every New Yorker can put food on the table during their time in need."

SNAP households already receiving the maximum monthly benefit, and those that had been receiving an emergency allotment of less than \$95 per month, will receive a minimum supplement of \$95. Nearly 1.6 million households in New York State will receive the supplemental benefits later this month, which will result in the state receiving roughly \$200 million in federal assistance.

SNAP households in all counties outside of New York City should see these benefits post starting today. Those SNAP households in the five-county New York City region should see their benefits post between July 19 and the end of the month.

As with the prior months, the payments will be delivered directly to recipients' existing Electronic Benefit Transfer account and can be accessed with their existing EBT card. Like regular SNAP benefits, the supplemental benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. Any unused SNAP benefits will be automatically carried over to the following month.

Struggling New Yorkers continue to rely heavily on SNAP as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. As of April 2021, there were more than 2.8 million SNAP recipients throughout the state, a 5 percent increase from April 2020.

For more information on the emergency supplemental SNAP benefits, including answers to frequently asked questions, visit OTDA's website at <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/>. New Yorkers can check their eligibility for SNAP and apply online <https://mybenefits.ny.gov/mybenefits/begin>.

With the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) opening the public comment period into the proposed overhaul of the dirty-fuel powered Astoria NRG power plant, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer announced his opposition to the proposal. The proposed power plant would be located at the heart of Astoria's "Asthma Alley"—a corridor through Astoria and Long Island City known for abnormally high childhood asthma rates and an overconcentration of New York City's power generating plants. The proposed overhaul could also undermine the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), a nation-leading state law enacted in 2019 that aims to reduce New York's carbon pollution.

Senator Schumer was joined by longtime project opponent and CLCPA champion, New York State Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, as well as State Senator Jessica Ramos, Assembly Member Zohran Mamdani, and Tiffany Cabán, organizers against the plant and climate justice leaders, along with other activists, organizers, and advocates.

"For too long, the people of western Queens have borne the brunt of the consequences of being home to far too many of New York's pollution-belching power plants – that needs to stop today," said U.S. Senator Schumer. "A rebuilt NRG plant that will keep a fossil fuel-dependent power plant in Astoria for years to come would directly undermine the urgently needed goals laid out in New York's groundbreaking climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. A law I was proud to champion. I am also proud to stand with great local leaders and activists who are fighting for climate justice, and we won't stop until we power-down this dangerous plan."

"Given the severity of the climate crisis, no new fossil fuel plants should be getting built, period. I will continue working with my community to fight against this ill-conceived project until it is finally dead. I'm glad we are joined in this fight by Leader Schumer because failure is not an option," said New York State Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris.

"Western Queens has been breathing polluted air for far too long and it has had damaging effects on the health of our community and environment. If New York wants to remain a leader in climate issues we need to stop burning fossil fuels," said State Senator Jessica Ramos. We are grateful to Senator Schumer for joining in our fight against the NRG Plant and for standing with our communities' right to a fair process and to breathe clean air."

(continued on page 4)

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MANAGING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUR PETS

by Stan Popovich

Many people who struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues sometimes have a difficult time taking care of their pets.

As a result, here are six ways on how to take care of your pets while you deal with your mental health issues.

Do what is most important: It is important that you take care of your pet’s main needs when you are struggling with your anxieties. Feeding your pet, making sure their healthy, and making sure they are living in a safe environment is what is most important. Remember to focus on taking care of the basic needs for your animals when you are having a difficult time in managing your anxieties.

1. **Ask for help:** If you have trouble taking care of your animals ask a friend or relative for some help. Some days can be tough to manage when your mental health issues get the best of you. Your friends or relatives will be happy to help you out if your struggling with your anxieties and fears. Do not let your anxieties stop you from adopting a pet.

2. **Consider using a pet sitter:** There are many pet sitters who would be willing to provide some assistance in making sure your animals are taken care of while your struggling with your mental health. Anxiety and depression can come and go for some people. As a result, some days are better than others. Use the services of a pet sitter when you need it.

3. **Plan ahead:** If you know you struggle with your mental health, don’t wait until the last minute to figure out how to take care of your pets. Develop a plan so when your mental health issues get the best of you, you will know what to do. This will give you the peace of mind that your animals are being taken care of while you get back on your feet.

4. **Learn from your past experiences:** Many people struggle with their anxieties on a regular basis. Try to learn from your experiences on how you can take care of yourself and your pets. This will help you the next time you struggle with your mental health because you will be better able to take care of your animals when your anxieties are out of control.

5. **Talk to your veterinarian:** Talk to your pet’s veterinarian on how to take care of your mental health and your animals at the same time. Remember that many people who deal with depression and anxiety have dogs and cats. The key is knowing what to do when your mental health issues get the best of you. Now is the time to plan ahead when it comes to taking care of your pets.

Remember to take it one day at a time. Instead of worrying about how you will get through the rest of the week or month when it comes to taking care of your animals and your mental health, try to focus on today. Each day can provide us with different opportunities to learn new things and that includes learning how to deal with your problems. Do not make quick judgements and learn to take things in stride rather than getting upset and anxious.



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Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya (@alonglastname), "I Still Believe in Our City," NYC Commission on Human Rights Public Artist in Residence (PAIR), a project in partnership with NYCCHRR and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.

INNER SPACE EXPLORATION WITH JOURNALING

by Dr. Sharon M. Cadiz

Space travel has recently been in the news, and a discussion of upcoming missions highlights the urge to jump off this planet and onto another. Other great leaps into the unknown include moving further and further away from the familiar *home front* back to the hectic pace of morning commutes to the office, workplace or school room. All of this comes to many of us mixed with fear and trepidation as the reality of life getting back to “normal” takes form. You may be asking yourself, “*What’s normal?*” as you pack your child’s lunch for summer day camp or consider that elbow to elbow morning subway ride among countless others shuffling through the morning or evening rush hour. Add to this picture, the monsoon type subway floods and waterfalls reported on during the past week, and you have your own dystopia movie plot developing in your head. Before you start saving for your ticket off this rock, take three deep breaths and begin to center yourself.

We are in the strange new *middle space* of masks, movement and mingling against a backdrop of daily reports of new variants such as the Delta variety. Its arrival has been announced in a most chilling way saying: “The Delta Variant is here” and is reported to be “a more transmissible form of the novel virus.” Even with such reports, there is still room to process the individual feelings that require attention. Your feeling state will determine whether or not you are taking in all or part of these messages and what, if anything, you will do with the information once you receive it. If the information puts you in survival mode, you may try to outrun the threat by jogging; become an agitated driver looking for a fight; shut down and withdraw or feel stuck and powerless. In a striving

mode, you may grapple with the challenges and find some partial solutions to help you cope. Ultimately, if you persevere, you may even thrive and use your experiences for personal growth and change. We need introspection to find out where we are on the emotional landscape before we can move forward in any direction, if we want to retain agency over our lives. Journaling can provide an outlet and a roadmap for finding a way through distressing feelings.

Inner space is probably a lesser-known journey for many who tough it out by going from “day to day” using daily news reports for guidance. I am among those of you who are searching for balance, harmony and good direction during these troubling times, and find that journaling is both helpful and therapeutic. Not everyone can put themselves in therapy to manage the understandable anxiety and worry produced by the times in which we are living. Of course, journaling is not a substitute for mental health services; however, it has proven value as a complementary form of self-support. For those averse to writing, you can use your cell phone to capture your thoughts and plans. By expressing the inner picture of how you are coping, you are remaining present in the only time that is promised; namely, right here and right now. In that space, you are able to express your strength, courage and self-determination. For those who still feel that journaling is a chore, another way to journal is through the use of a daily plan, agenda or even a grocery list. All of these express some level of your intention to be present in your life. Words have the unquestionable power to harm or to heal. Writing down plans and projections of needs and intentions

gives us back our power to decide and take responsibility for our lives.

The rigid guidance that shut down everything back in 2020 was necessary, and it left no room for questioning. In a very important way, being told what to do saved us from agonizing over a subjective, individualized set of decisions. Now, we are being given back the ‘reins’ to steer us through this current chapter in the COVID journey. Essential workers and those who continued to leave home for work or who adapted to at-home functioning while continuing to work throughout the past year, might be experiencing exhaustion and the added burden of an anticipated ‘full house’ as workplaces move toward having all or most employees back on the job. We are living through a time of ambiguity and uncertainty as we ponder the “yes”/“no” options and policies that flip the mask off while shrinking and expanding the six feet of distance. Masks, gatherings and hand cleaning are all fading in and out depending on where you are going; how many people will be there and whether you are inside or outside. There are a lot of moving parts to consider, as well as the daily news feed reporting on new threats every day. Normal just got *not so normal*. Erring on the side of caution is not everyone’s choice, so we are traveling a rocky road of self-doubt, worry, fear and confusion. Add to this the urgent longing to escape it all or resume ‘normal’ activities. At this point, you may want to check again to see how much it would cost to blast off into the great beyond in a rocket ship to space.

Before things get too crazy, now might be the “write” time (I couldn’t resist) to sit either with pen and paper or your cell phone in hand to sort out your feelings in some way. It might even be your best form of meditation or prayerful expression. Although we don’t always have control over the day-to-day occurrences, we can certainly work on controlling the direction and quality of our thoughts that create our feelings. You may note the movement and change of feelings. Often, in a state of depression or deep worry, one might imagine that the feelings are inescapable and interminable. Patterns of behavior and thought that promote this feeling can compound the despair and sense of hopelessness. Inner reflection can help you to challenge negative emotions and spark a courageous response in words that support your peace of mind.

I now find the need to recommit and rekindle the highest, not the lowest, set of personal routines during this period of *midlife* for the COVID19 pandemic. We are not at the end, and this is the fact that is most confusing given the seemingly contradictory messages indicating that we are encouraged to resume our normal activities. Things are not totally safe or free from further risk. There is much concern regarding new variants and a reluctance on the part of some to get vaccinated. I must strive to be clearheaded and cautious as opposed to overly relaxed or reckless. If you, like me, wake up uncertain about how to live in these turbulent times, know that you are not alone, but whenever you have that quiet moment in your day, think about how you feel; how you can manage those feelings, and the actions you will take to secure your safety as you move through the activities of your day. If, in the stillness, you choose to write down or record your thoughts, you will be taking control and perhaps feeling less victimized by circumstances.

About six or seven years ago, a former

colleague, who is a mental health professional, approached me with excitement about a process that she was recently trained in called “Journal to the Self.” She wanted my help in organizing a workshop to share this technique, which is said to “open the door to self-understanding by writing, reading and creating a journal.” It is based on the work of Kathleen Adams, an author, speaker and psychotherapist who wrote: “Journal to the Self: Twenty-Two Paths to Personal Growth” with built-in step by step guidance to encourage “personal growth, creative expression and career enhancement through journal writing.” I put the event together with a small group and we met one summer evening in Socrates Sculpture Park where we were taken through exercises and a full explanation of this self-reflection approach.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of being guided by many mentors, colleagues, family members and friends in my inner exploration with the use of a variety of self-inquiry tools and techniques that promote wellness. They represent an array of holistic methods that can be easily accessed and utilized. I have found that journaling can help as a navigational tool designed to identify feelings and move us safely through emotional states. Again, it is not intended to replace other forms of professional help or mental health services, but more as a self-directed form of discovery that can often provide relief from feelings of helplessness or hopelessness. If one is in need of mental health services, The Floating Hospital is a local provider that can easily be reached by calling 718-784-2240. Byron Katie, author and speaker, who teaches a method of self-inquiry known as “The Work” can be another source of support through her approach to challenging our thinking with the use of four basic questions: Is it true? Can you absolutely know that it is true? How do you react when you believe that thought? Who would you be without that thought? Arianna Huffington, co-founder of the Huffington Post and CEO of Thrive Global has established “the mission to end the epidemic of burnout by offering companies and individuals sustainable, science-based solutions to enhance both well-being and performance.” Kathleen Adams, Byron Katie and Arianna Huffington have created platforms that can be useful for supporting those who have been in the workplace throughout the pandemic; those returning and those who are remaining at home. Dale Carnegie even has something to think or write about when he refers to tips and techniques for “analyzing worry” and bringing peace to one’s mental attitude. He says: “Get all the facts.” “Weigh the facts.” “Fill your mind with thoughts of peace, courage, health and hope.” Lastly, a little book entitled “Inner Space: Your Guide to Finding Personal Peace” by Stafford Whiteaker contains the following quote that shows the power of words in soothing worries and producing clarity: “When we feel lost, confused, angry, or hurt, we need space to find out why. The answers lie within us. Getting in touch with them gives us freedom to recover balance. When we are overwhelmed with demands and the noise and confusion of the world, we need peace. Such a sanctuary is inside us. Going there gives us a retreat from the world. This wonderful place of healing and peace is our inner space.” Whether you get there with journaling or some other way, know that it is worth the trip.

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Essential Worker Child Care Scholarship

The Office of Children and Family Services is providing **\$25 million** in child care scholarships for children of essential workers.

Eligible workers with children ages six weeks to 12 years old whose income is less than 300% of the federal poverty level will receive assistance for child care costs through this initiative.



(continued from front page)

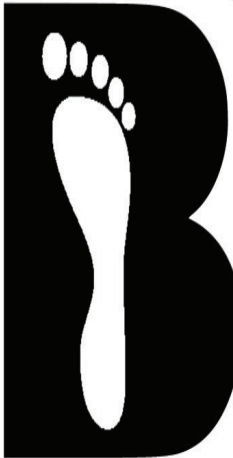
DIRTY FUEL POWER PLANT

Schumer explained that Astoria, Queens is home to multiple power-generating facilities. This has given the community the reputation of being New York City’s “Asthma Alley” – home to higher rates of asthma than elsewhere in the city. Schumer noted the densely populated nearby communities, including homeowners and tenants in Astoria and Long Island City, as well as some of the largest public housing developments in the nation at Queensbridge and Ravenswood. The overhaul of the Astoria NRG power plant would continue to exacerbate the problem, making the fight against asthma increasingly difficult, not to mention the fight against climate change and reducing carbon pollution, said Schumer.

The state legislature passed the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019, a bill championed by Schumer and local electeds gathered today, to mitigate the effects of climate change by drastically cutting greenhouse gases, diverting the state’s energy reliance to renewable sources, and creating green jobs to promote environmental justice across New York State. The bill is the most comprehensive and aggressive climate change legislation in the nation. The law targets include an 85% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040, and 70% renewable energy by 2030. The proposed overhaul of the NRG Astoria plant, which would be powered by fossil fuels, would be automatically in violation of the CLCPA and would require a waiver from the DEC to even operate.

This week, the state DEC opened their public comment period on the project’s draft permits. The public comment period lasts through August 29. Schumer joined local elected officials in urging local residents to participate in the public comment period, to let the DEC know they should reject the permits.


Schumer explained that the world’s leading energy organization, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has issued a strong warning on the immediate need to drastically scale back fossil fuels. The Guardian reported that “Exploitation and development of new oil and gas fields must stop this year and no new coal-fired power stations can be built if the world is to stay within safe limits of global heating and meet the goal of new zero emissions by 2050, the world’s leading organization has said.” A rebuilt NRG plant that will keep a fossil fuel-dependent power plant in Astoria for years would not only undermine the goals laid out in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, but also the need to scale back fossil fuels to meet the new zero emissions goal by 2050, Schumer explained.



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Commanding Officer, 108th Precinct, NYPD Captain Lavonda M. Wise
Community Affairs: Det. Luis Diaz, Det. Marc Torres, Council Pres. Diane Ballek,
VP: Abi Rahman, Secretary Johanna Carmona, Sgt. at Arms Richard O'Connor

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NY State Info

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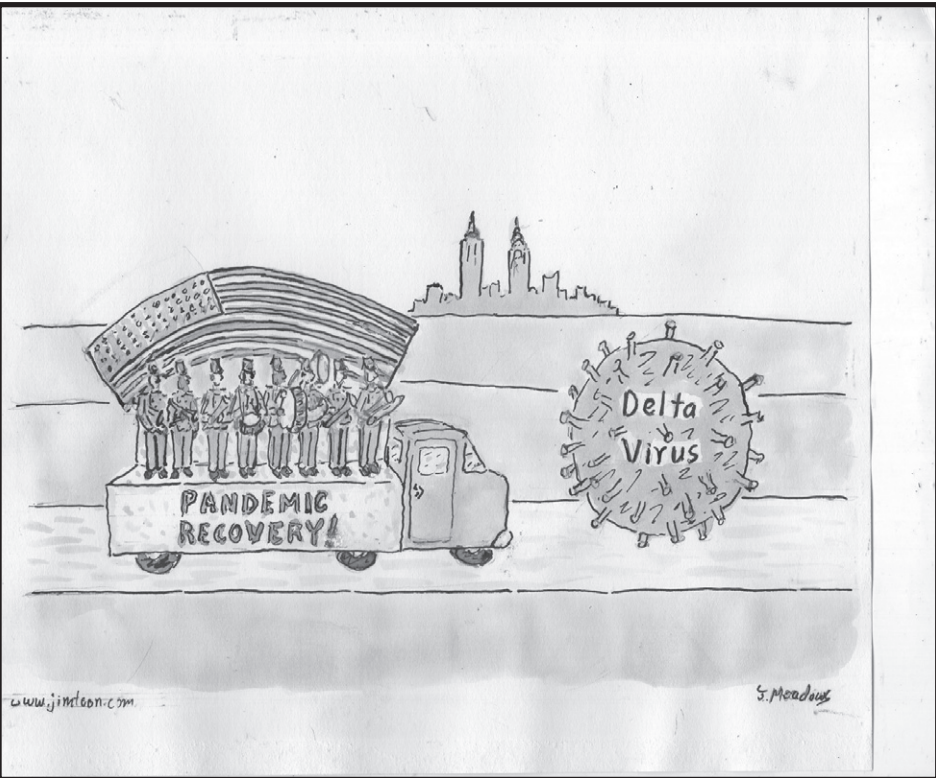
*Nurse Family Partnership Program – (844)-637-6667/ nursefamilypartnership.org serves all five boroughs providing support to mothers

*LifeNet – Mental Health Association in New York State; confidential counseling support; 1-800-543-3638

*SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association national helpline at 1-800-HELP (4357) for substance abuse or mental support.

*NY Foundling Parenting Support Helpline: (888-435-7553). Child Abuse Prevention Program and Crisis Nursery. The Crisis Nursery is located at 590 Avenue of the Americas (6th Avenue) in Manhattan and offers “temporary safe haven for children from birth to age 10.”

*Suicide Prevention Lifeline – National helpline for those “having trouble coping.” English 1-800-273-8255 (en espanol, 1-800-628-9454)



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Important Update for P-EBT Food Benefits Covering the 2020-21 School Year

New York State continues to distribute Pandemic EBT food benefits to all households with eligible children who receive free school lunch under the National School Lunch Act.

Here are important updates to the distribution as of June 23:

- Students who had their in-person attendance to public school in the New York City area reduced due to the pandemic will receive their first benefit for the months of September 2020 through March 2021 **between now and the end of June.**
- Eligible public-school students in the rest of the state – all areas outside the five boroughs – can expect to receive their first benefits for the months of September 2020 through March 2021 between **late June and the end of July.**
- Eligible children attending non-public schools such as private and charter schools will start to receive benefits **beginning in late July or early August.**



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FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT
KIMBERLY JOHNSON, COLLEGE READINESS COORDINATOR VIA EMAIL AT
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Office of Assemblyman Brian Barnwell

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When: EVERY SUNDAY starting July 25th.

Meeting time: 10am

Where: Meet at 55-19 69th Street,
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Projects include/not limited to: Graffiti removal,
mulching, sweeping, cleaning tree pits & other
locations.

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DEC 5
2021

"Party atmosphere" with Patron of the Art Cafe, the festive Annual Crafts show is scheduled at holiday time in the Queen of Angels Parish Center on Skillman at 44th St. To receive prospectus, email SunnysideArtists@gmail.com.

2022

Skillman's Copper Kettle's 51st St. exterior street wall will be the site of the winning mural competition entry, with finalists' entries showcased for five weeks inside, with the Luke Adams Prizes wine reception. Prospectus in August, 2021.

STREET
MURAL

SAVE THE DATES

SUNNYSIDEARTISTS