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<b>September 2010</b>		<b>SoBRO E-Newsletter</b>
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<p><b>Welcome to SoBRO's End of Summer Newsletter Greetings SoBRO Supporters,</b></p> <p>Welcome to the fourth edition of our electronic newsletter. Read on to learn about just a few things SoBRO staff have been doing during the summer months.</p> <p>You can call us if you have any questions or would like to know more about any of these stories at (718) 292-3113 or email us at <a href="mailto:info@sobro.org">info@sobro.org</a>. Enjoy!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>  <p>Phillip Morrow President / CEO SoBRO</p>		<input type="button" value="Join Our Mailing List!"/>
<p><b>Third Annual Get Green: South Bronx Earth Festival</b></p> <p>On April 24, over 1,500 Bronx residents gathered in the sun of Saint Mary's Park in Mott Haven for an afternoon celebration of environment and community. The third annual Get Green: South Bronx Earth Fest, organized in part by SoBRO, was a great success.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Green Man poses with Get Green staff.</i></p> <p>Community residents turned out in large numbers to learn about environmental initiatives through artwork,</p>		<p><b><a href="#">SoBRO E-Newsletter Online Archive</a></b></p> <p><b>News in Brief</b> Now you can find SoBRO on Facebook. To join our discussion of all things Bronx, <a href="#">click here</a> and become a fan.</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>The Real Estate Development department <a href="#">has made major strides</a> toward bringing two more high quality housing and commercial</p>

music, games, and dance. The activities were as hip as they were green: at a recycled clothing fashion show, youth donned their finest reused clothing and took to the stage; dancers competed in a hip-hop competition deejayed by MC Grandmaster Caz; kids painted original artwork with themes of sustainability; and young and old listened to music staged by the grass roots hip-hop group Tools of War.

Get Green Fest attendees were encouraged to bring used household items to the park where they could be recycled. People traded in televisions, printers, cell phones, old clothes, and running shoes and received prizes in return.

Besides SoBRO, Get Green partners included the New Bronx Chamber of Commerce; the Council on the Environment of New York City; City Matters LLC; Nos Quedamos; the NYC Office of Recycling, Outreach, and Education; Waste Management; and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.

## Earth Day Book Drive Brings Thousands of Books to SoBRO Students

On Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, HarperCollins held their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Earth Day Book Drive for the benefit of SoBRO youth and adult programs. Throughout the day, SoBRO staff received updates on how well the drive was going. Laura Collins of HarperCollins reported early in the day that they had already collected 10 boxes of new and used books



*SoBRO students browse the donated books.*

from various divisions. That number ballooned, and by day's end, just over 100 boxes of books were packed up and sent to the SoBRO Center. With an emphasis on reuse, many of these books were distributed to attendees of SoBRO's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Get Green Festival, which took place at St. Mary's Park on Sat. April 24<sup>th</sup>. The rest were sorted, cataloged, and now reside in SoBRO's library, where they are available to students in the Education and Career Development Department. The variety and quality of books is astounding. With titles ranging from Richard Wright's classic *Native Son* to the "gripping space adventure" *Beyond the Stars* by William Shatner, the library will provide SoBRO students with a rich and varied resource for learning and entertainment.

## Food Justice & Nutrition in the South Bronx

The South Bronx, known to many as an epicenter of fast food and diet-related health problems, may be an unlikely place to start a food

projects to fruition.

SoBRO [has received funding](#) from The Fund for Public Health in New York for an anti-tobacco initiative, which will become a part of the Service Learning program.

The 2010 Census is now complete, and SoBRO is proud to have been a partner in the effort to get a fair and accurate measurement of our community's needs. Check out the [New York region's Census website](#) for more information.

The SoBRO Industrial Business Zone program has successfully lobbied for the [installation of parking meters](#) in the Bathgate section of the Bronx to help local businesses attract more customers.

After a brief hiatus, the South Bronx Leadership Forum is back. [Click here](#) to read summaries of the most recent forums and what to expect from upcoming events in the series.

Earlier this year, major government budget cuts

revolution. However, SoBRO has developed a number of initiatives in the past months to challenge assumptions of apathy regarding nutrition and address issues of food justice in the community.

In January, the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation chose SoBRO as the lead agency in the new Green Carts Microenterprise Intermediary Program. The program assists specially-licensed vendors who sell fruit and vegetables in the City's low-income "food deserts"-places with little or no access to foods necessary to maintain a healthy diet. Since then, Green Cart vendors have shown up selling fresh produce to residents all over the Bronx.



*Green Cart vendor Ramiro Navarrete sells produce in the HUB.*

The Fresh Food Retail Attraction Seminar, held at the SoBRO Center in March, brought together representatives from city agencies, development corporations, and the food industry to discuss obstacles facing fresh food access in the city's poorest neighborhoods and how to address them. Panelists discussed ways to alleviate the problem, such as the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health, or FRESH program, which promotes the establishment and retention of grocery stores in disadvantaged communities by offering zoning and financial incentives.

Most recently, board member Dennis Derryck has included SoBRO in his mission to bring healthy food to the South Bronx via a community-supported agriculture program. SoBRO is one of seven Bronx agencies that serve as local distribution sites for fresh produce direct from Corbin Hill Road Farm and other farms in upstate New York.

Far from being confined to wealthy outposts, food justice is very much alive in the Bronx today. Our programs not only help to raise awareness of the challenges facing our community, but are also trial runs for real and sustainable solutions.

threatened to slash adult literacy programs across the city, including those at SoBRO. [Click here](#) to see what SoBRO and other groups did to restore nearly 80% of funding and prevent the loss of a crucial pillar of support at a time when residents needed it most.

### **Upcoming Events**

*For the most up-to-date listings, visit our [events calendar](#).*

**September 24:**  
[Annual Bronx Business Expo](#)

**October 14:**  
[Reginald F. Lewis Lecture Series Inaugural Event](#)

**October 19:**  
[SBLF: The Impact of Health Care Reform](#)

**November 18:**  
[Next EDP Workshop Series](#)

**December 7:**  
SoBRO 38th Anniversary Gala (email [info@sobro.org](mailto:info@sobro.org) to be added to the Gala mailing list).

## **Meet Our Board**

J. Bruce Llewellyn, a founding member of SoBRO's Board and one of the most influential businessmen of his generation, died earlier this year at the age of 82.

Mr. Llewellyn first became involved in the Bronx's business community when he bought a chain of grocery stores, the Fedco Foods Corporation, in 1969. Two years later, he was instrumental in founding SoBRO to help entrepreneurs such as himself grow their businesses and attract more jobs to the community. He served as the first treasurer of the nascent organization. Later, as Chair of the SoBRO Board of



Directors, he would leave his mark on the organization by greatly expanding its real estate efforts, which was especially important at a time when businesses and resident were leaving behind vacant lots and buildings at a record pace.

Some of Bruce's greatest triumphs came during his tenure as Chairman of the SoBRO Board, a position he assumed in the early 1980's after serving as an advisor to President Jimmy Carter's administration. His most famous feat in the realm of American business occurred in 1985 when he organized a group of black businessmen to acquire the Philadelphia Coca Cola bottling plant. He was the first black person to ever acquire one of the company's bottling facilities, and he grew it into the third large African-American owned business in the United States.

Before he rose to such prominence, Llewellyn was a founding member of 100 Black Men, an African American empowerment organization focused on business, along with many other influential figures such as future New York City Mayor David Dinkins. Bruce Llewellyn's life and actions embodied the entrepreneurial spirit that SoBRO strives to stimulate and harness for the improvement of our community, and we are proud of our shared past with this towering figure in American business. To learn more, [click here](#) to see his obituary in the New York Times.

## Bronx Business Bio: Parallel Products



"Waste" is a relative term. Soda expiring on the shelf, billions of plastic bottles carrying water no better than what comes from the tap: to Parallel Products these aren't examples of waste. They're new lines of business.

Parallel Products, a Kentucky-based recycling company that opened a Bronx plant in 2006, processes the plastic and aluminum containers that are returned for the five cent deposits in New York State, as well as expired products directly from producers and retailers. It is these latter items that allow Parallel to employ an innovative scheme for reuse: turning Fanta into fuel. By processing the sugars and alcohol in expired beverages, Parallel produces over five million gallons of ethanol fuel every year. They turn the containers into plastic flakes and processed aluminum, both of which are of great value to manufacturers of everything from carpet to fiberglass, and voila: an entire container goes from trash to treasure, all thanks to one innovative company.

Parallel employs 36 people at their Bronx facility, and processes over 1.2 billion containers each year. Expansion plans could double the number of workers, and the number of bottles processed is expected to grow thanks to New York's "Bigger Better Bottle Bill," which extends the five cent deposit system to bottled water. Through the Port Morris Industrial Business Zone program, for which SoBRO is the administrator, SoBRO has helped Parallel to access a number of incentive programs. With SoBRO as a guide, they are on track to receive certification for the powerful Empire Zone program before the end of 2010, which will allow them to receive an estimated \$4 million in tax credits over the next five years. We are proud to work with Parallel on creating local jobs in an industry with such bright prospects while

helping to make New York a greener place to live and work.

For more information about Parallel Products, visit [parallelproducts.com](http://parallelproducts.com).

## SoBRO Programs Help the Bronx Fight the Recession

Even before the current period of economic hardships began, the South Bronx was among the poorest districts in the nation. For those who struggle even in relatively good times, the recession has only made it more difficult to pursue the education and job opportunities that sustain and improve their quality of life.

For many years, SoBRO has run programs targeted to these people hit first and hardest when prosperity wanes. One such program, the Wage Subsidy Program, funded by the New York State Department of Labor, encourages employers to hire new workers by subsidizing employee training periods, and further rewarding employers if they hire the placements long term. SoBRO has placed over 70 individuals through Wage Subsidy in the past year. The Career Pathways Program (CPP) and Jobs To Build On (JTBO), supported by the NY State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and Consortium for Worker Education, respectively, are also designed to get underserved populations into stable employment, but with a different approach. These initiatives train participants for placement in high demand fields such as healthcare, transportation, and retail, and then provide aggressive job search and placement assistance. In the past two years, around 250 people have found employment through these two programs.

SoBRO also administers programs that help businesses expand their operations, creating jobs on the other side of the employment equation. For instance Parallel Products, profiled in this edition's Bronx Business Bio, is expanding and adding dozens of jobs when the prevailing trend is to do just the opposite.

Over that last two years ago, SoBRO has helped over 600 Bronx residents to buck the steadily rising unemployment rates and find stable work. At 13%, the unemployment rate in the Bronx continues to be the highest of any county in New York State. SoBRO's dedicated staff will continue to help residents attain the education and job security that should be available to everyone willing to work for it, no matter where the numbers on Wall Street currently stand.

### **About SoBRO**

*SoBRO, a not-for-profit community development corporation, has been serving the South Bronx since 1972. SoBRO's programs include adult education and workforce training, real estate and community development, technical and financial assistance for businesses, and an array of programs for youth. For additional information about SoBRO, call 718 292-3113 or visit [www.sobro.org](http://www.sobro.org).*

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