

# Local group pushes for better entrance to Noble Playground

by Noah Fowle  
 Hoping to tackle one local safety issue at a time, the United Coalition Association has shifted its focus to improve the entrance to Noble Playground.

Currently, the frequently used park's only official entrance is right off the Cross Bronx Expressway. Through a variety of outreach strategies and also by teaming up with Councilwoman Annabel Palma, the executive director of UCA, Ronald Savage, is working to bring a better entrance to the park along its adjacent side on Noble Avenue. According to local residents, most people are already using a hole in the fence to enter the park from this side in order to avoid the heavy traffic and potentially dangerous situation that the entrance on the Cross Bronx Expressway presents.

Savage said that after local parents alerted him of their concerns, he began

a letter writing campaign on their behalf. There have been a series of accidents along that stretch of road and accidents are getting closer and closer to the entrance, said Savage.

With two schools, ES 102 and St. Anthony's, only a few blocks away, Savage made it clear that something must be done to ensure the safety of the youngsters who flock to the park after school and in the summertime. "I recently saw an accident there myself and my heart just went out to those families who are worried for their own children," said Savage. "Right now, the area is just too dangerous and the fact that this could save somebody's life makes it too important to ignore."

Palma said that she was pleased to lend her support to Savage and the UCA and hoped that his example would lead other local residents to become more involved in community issues. "This is a clear example of the



Ronald Savage, the executive director of the United Coalition Association, shows the hole in the fence that many community members are using to access Noble Playground instead of its regular entrance off the Cross Bronx Expressway. — PHOTO BY WALTER FORSLIND

power communities have when they come together and organize around issues that affect them. In this case we have a situation where neighborhood residents felt that their children's lives were in danger and by coming together and presenting a clear plan on how to protect them, the community was able to use their collective voice to find a positive solution," said Palma. "We applaud the community's effort and the Parks Department's willingness to listen to that community voice. This is a victory not only for our community but for the Parks Department as well."

Margaret Sistrunk, a Beach Avenue resident, uses the local park often with

her children, but refuses to use the entrance near the highway and instead opts to enter and exit through the hole in the fence. "Anything can happen near the highway," said Sistrunk. "If kids are standing by the entrance and there is an accident, they are going to get seriously hurt."

Sistrunk said turning the hole in the fence into the main entrance is the most logical choice. "People are already using it," she said. "Plus, it would really improve safety in the park."

The UCA's initiative at the Noble Playground is only the group's most recent attempt to address local safety

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concerns. Last month, Savage helped organize the community to petition the Department of Transportation to perform a traffic safety survey at the intersection of Rosedale Avenue and Mansion Street. Bronx DOT Commissioner Joseph Palmieri received Savage's letters and agreed to institute a survey of the area to determine if it warranted the installation of a traffic device at the intersection, which currently has only a two-way stop sign.

At a recent street fair, Savage set up a table in order to reach out to local community members about other concerns that they have. According to Savage, many residents are worried

about their children being injured by reckless motorists in the streets. "The safety on the streets in our neighborhoods is a big issue," he said. "And I don't understand why it hasn't been addressed before."

Savage said that he is prepared to fight for any community issue that is brought to his attention. "A lot of people speak up, but still nothing ever gets done," said Savage. "I am ready to make a stink until these issues are resolved."

To contact UCA regarding a local concern, call (718) 842-3751 or email [communityaffairs@unitedcoalitionassociation.org](mailto:communityaffairs@unitedcoalitionassociation.org).