



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR THE DA'S WEEKLY EBLAST,
EMAIL REQUESTS TO
INFO@QUEENS.DA.ORG

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A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

FUNDING BOOST WILL HELP US FIGHT CRIME

I joined Mayor Eric Adams recently when he announced increased funding for the five district attorneys' offices in New York City.

An extra \$17 million will be added to the budgets of the district attorneys' offices. This is much-needed funding that will help support our efforts to drive down crime in all five boroughs – keeping residents and visitors to our city safe.

Fighting crime means tackling a host of issues. We must evolve just as those who break our laws become smarter and more tech savvy. We are grateful for the influx of cash that will support our efforts to stay ahead of the criminals.

In Queens, we're receiving \$1.75 million that will be used to build a dedicated forensic crime lab. This lab will enable us to extract, analyze and store digital evidence from phones and other electronic devices.

This is the support we need to ensure a more effective judicial system that serves every community within our borough.

In Friendship,

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NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, along with dozens of members of her staff, participated in the National Night Out Against Crime, an annual nationwide event on the first Tuesday in August.

"We joined millions of neighbors across the United States in celebrating National Night Out – an event inspired by the limitless potential of what we can accomplish when unity and trust exists between law enforcement and our communities," said DA Katz.

The long-running event of picnics and barbecues at parks and playgrounds, along with cookouts and block parties, serves to build a bond between the people of Queens and law enforcement. This was also the first year the new 116th Precinct participated in NNO.

DA Katz swore in the new precinct council executive board at their inaugural National Night Out celebration held at Brookville Park.

The DA stopped at other precinct locations, too. Representatives from the DA's office staffed

every NNO location in Queens and handed out information on how to spot a scam to where to seek help if you've been a victim of a crime.

The QDA's office's new highly-trained facility dog, Kimi, also attended events.

National Night Out is an opportunity to interact with community leaders and to meet the police officers and other law enforcement officials in a festive atmosphere and to connect on a more personal level.

This annual tradition was first established as a way for citizens to symbolically reclaim the streets, to promote community-building with those tasked with protecting and serving the community.

"Every year we affirm our commitment to keeping each other safe from increased harm caused by the drivers of crime," said DA Katz. "I am proud to join our local precincts, community-based organizations, cure-violence programs and youth groups across Queens in celebrating that mutual pledge."



ADDITIONAL ARRESTS IN ALLEGED STAGED CAR CRASHES



Last October, DA Katz promised to continue the investigation into an alleged staged car crash that was caught on video on the Belt Parkway in Rosedale. In that incident, a driver stopped just after a vehicle pulled in front of her SUV. She avoided a collision, but moments later the car that stopped suddenly in front of her appeared to intentionally reverse and then strike her vehicle.

One individual was arrested, soon after that incident. Recently, two more men have been arrested and charged with insurance fraud, staging car crashes and other crimes. These two individuals allegedly participated in the October 2024 crash, as well as other staged collisions.

The investigation showed that one of the recently charged defendants allegedly met people at a medical clinic and recruited them to be participants with the promise of thousands of dollars in compensation.

In addition to the October 16, 2024, incident that was caught on the victim's dashcam, there were two earlier allegedly staged crashes on August 24, 2024, on the Belt Parkway and on October 3, 2024, on the Nassau Expressway.

Insurance claims were submitted for all three of these crashes, one of them totaling more than \$79,000.

"Scammers who organize dangerous accidents for the sole purpose of extracting money from innocent drivers will be investigated and prosecuted," said DA Katz. "We are grateful that the initial victim came forward with this shocking dashcam video of one of the collisions."

Anyone who believes they may have been victimized by a staged car crash or another form of insurance fraud should reach out to the state Insurance Fraud Hotline at 888-372-8369.

CASES OF INTEREST

A 29-year-old father was found guilty of killing his 3-year-old son. **Shaquan Butler**, who was living in an Elmhurst shelter, claimed his son was choking and that he was trying to save the toddler in November 2022 when the boy died. The medical examiner determined that the child died from blunt force trauma to his torso and there was no evidence his airway was obstructed.

The child also had 23 fractures to his ribs. The victim's 2-year-old brother was also found to be malnourished and showed physical injuries from abuse. A jury found Butler guilty of murder, assault and endangering the welfare of a child. He faces up to 32 years to life in prison at sentencing.

In a separate case, **True Jackson** pleaded guilty to burglary for squatting in an empty St. Albans home in the spring of 2024. Jackson's name was on a forged lease recovered during a court-authorized search of the home, where the defendant also kept pit bull dogs in the basement.

Police responded to a domestic dispute at the



home between Jackson and two others. At that time, the three claimed to be the legal occupants of the house. Family members of the property's owner, who'd moved out months earlier, did not give anyone permission to be there.

Jackson was sentenced as a predicate felon to two to four years in prison. Jackson's codefendants pleaded guilty to criminal trespass and were given conditional discharges.

QDA MOBILE LIBRARY

The DA's office continues to meet people in the community with its mobile library office hours. Staff members recently visited the East Elmhurst library branch on Astoria Boulevard, where neighbors asked questions and received handouts on a variety of issues ranging from assistance for survivors of domestic violence to information on elder abuse and how to stop a scam. There's always something available for the younger library visitors such as coloring books and QDA swag.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

The end of summer means the beginning of school. Every year our office hosts a Back-to-School Giveaway that includes school supplies.

Students and parents gathered at P.S. 14Q

Fairview and for free school bookbags. The bags contained a variety of essentials from pencils and pens to lunch boxes, water bottles and notebooks and two-pocket folders.

