

# BRONX PROUD



**M**ercy College is deeply embedded in the Bronx — offering programs, partnerships and initiatives that serve both Mercy students and the local community. This intentional community engagement strategy is driven by the leadership at Mercy, with Executive Director of Recruitment for the Bronx Campus Cecil Wright, Ed.D., and Vice President, MercyManhattan and Bronx Campuses Scorpio Rogers in the driver's seat. They have spent the past several months reconnecting with community leaders and building partnerships to further Mercy's impact and create even more opportunities for students to learn skills and build knowledge that will benefit them after graduation.

For example, Mercy's Bronx Campus has become a top producer of health care professionals in the New York area. The campus houses several Mercy College School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHNS) programs, including the second-degree nursing



Photo by Samuel Ward

Cecil Wright

bachelor's program and the physician assistant master's program. There is an entire floor at the Bronx Campus that is dedicated to SHNS programs with some of the most state-of-the-art simulation facilities in the Bronx. These simulation facilities enable students to enhance their skills and knowledge across a variety of patients and situations before they start their clinical placements. There continues to be high demand for health care professionals in the area, and the Bronx Campus plays an important role in training high-quality professionals to fill those roles.

For business students, the Mercy Business Incubation Center located at the Bronx Campus offers the opportunity to gain first-hand experience and learn from local entrepreneurs. Participating companies can use office space at Mercy in exchange for giving projects and internships to Mercy students. Students interning with Bronx Fashion Week, for example, help run an annual prom dress donation program by conducting outreach to Bronx high schools, creating flyers and staffing "shopping" events where local high school students can choose formal outfits for free. The interns gain experience and transferable skills while giving back to the



Photo by John Ralioia

Scorpio Rogers

community. "So many Mercy students have helped make this annual event a success," said Flora Montes, Bronx Fashion Week founder and Bronx native. "It's





Photo by Leslie Kahan Photography

a match made in heaven to be at Mercy.”

The Bronx Campus regularly hosts free events that bring the Mercy community and the local community together. The popular LatinX Fiesta has expanded to become a two-day event full of music, dancing, food and performances. Speakers included Deputy Bronx Borough President Janet Peguero and New York Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez. The event drew many Mercy students, faculty and staff in addition to over 500 local high school students. “We wanted to celebrate all the contributions that Hispanic people and culture have made in the Bronx community,” said Wright. The Bronx Campus held a Pride Month celebration in 2022 with community leaders to recognize programs that advance LGBTQIA+ student success.

As another way to give back to the

community, local partner organizations are welcomed to use campus facilities for their own events. The nonprofit College Bridge Café held programs on the Bronx Campus for approximately 300 Bronx high school students. Participants toured all three Mercy campuses, interacted with Mercy students and gained a feel for what college life could be like. Organizations such as the Bronx Clergy Task Force also regularly hold meetings at the Bronx Campus.

In addition, the students, faculty and staff from the Bronx Campus take every opportunity to provide direct support to the Bronx community. For example, after the tragic fire in a Bronx apartment building, the Mercy community organized donation drives on every campus to benefit fire victims and organized Mercy vans to transport donated goods to local hospitals and hotels. And,

when the Crotona Parkway Malls needed support, Darcia Mbaye '21 recruited her fellow students to partake in a neighborhood cleanup effort. In addressing the issue of food insecurity, the Bronx Campus partnered with Hunts Point Produce Market, led by alumnus Phillip Grant, M.B.A. '08, to distribute free, fresh produce to Mercy students and the surrounding community.

Mercy is already embedded in the Bronx, but Rogers hopes to deepen the College's connections with the community even more. As a first-generation student who was raised partly in the South Bronx, he brings a unique perspective to leading the Bronx Campus — a role he proudly began in August 2022. “I'm excited for all the new ideas and plans that are in the works,” he said. “We'll have more — lots more — to share very soon.”