



TARGETED STRIKES

THE ISRAELI ARMY ISSUED EVACUATION ORDERS AND TARGETED HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS IN GAZA CITY SUNDAY, URGING PALESTINIANS TO FLEE SOUTH AHEAD OF AN ESCALATING OFFENSIVE. A5

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STAPLETON

Mom demands action after son’s drowning



Christina Cardona visits the Stapleton waterfront on Aug. 28, where her 6-year-old son, Thomas Sanchez, tragically drowned earlier that month. Shaina McLawrence, Staten Island Advance

Thomas Sanchez, 6, drowned after accessing an unfenced section of the Stapleton waterfront. Now his mother is urging the city to close the gap to prevent future tragedies.

Shaina McLawrence
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On a stretch of shoreline in Stapleton, a painful reminder of tragedy haunts one Staten Island family. This is where 6-year-old Thomas Sanchez, a non-verbal child with autism, drowned last month after he got out of his home and accessed an unfenced section of the waterfront. Thomas had wandered to an approximately 50-foot opening on the far right corner of a park closest to the waterfront’s rocky shoreline. The area is about 500 feet from the intersection of Front and Canal streets. His mother, Christina Cardona, 37, described her son as energetic, intelligent, and affectionate, with a fondness for sensory comforts like chew toys, goldfish crackers, and playful routines with his family.



Thomas Sanchez Family photo

And now he’s gone. In the wake of his death, Cardona is fighting to make sure no other family experiences the loss that she did. The mother has launched a petition on Change.org calling for the city to close the gap in the fencing and improve safety measures at the Stapleton waterfront. “Thomas is what’s getting me to do this. His life matters,” she said. “I want to prevent something like this from happening again, that because of Thomas, no other child or anybody will suffer.”

BOY FOUND UNCONSCIOUS Just before 9 a.m. on Aug. 17, Cardona flagged down local police to help search for her missing son near Broad Street and Tompkins Avenue. Officers canvassed the area and found Thomas unconscious in the water at the edge of Stapleton Waterfront Park. Despite lifesaving efforts and transport to Richmond University Medical Center in West Brighton, Thomas was pronounced dead. The investigation remains ongoing, according to police. Cardona believes Thomas wandered to a familiar section of the pier near Front Street, a place he often visited with his siblings, and accessed the water through the gap in the fencing. “It’s not like it’s a puddle,” she said. “Anybody can fall in.”

SAFETY CONCERNS AT THE WATERFRONT Although the rest of the waterfront walking path at the park is gated, Cardona pointed out that the corner section where Thomas drowned had no barriers or gates. Cardona emphasized the preventable nature of the tragedy, noting that her son would not have been able to climb over a fence had one been present. When reached for comment about safety precautions planned for the area, the New York City Parks Department expressed its sympathies for Thomas’ **SEE STAPLETON WATERFRONT, A2**

NYC MAYORAL RACE

Sanders backs Mamdani at Brooklyn rally

Senator calls Mamdani “the future of the Democratic party” as race heats up.

Anthony Izaguirre Associated Press

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders and Zohran Mamdani rallied supporters at a town hall in Brooklyn on Saturday, slamming President Donald Trump and boosting their shared progressive message as Mamdani works to energize his base in the final weeks of the New York City mayor’s race. The crowd was friendly, and the reception was almost entirely warm. The idea of health care as a human right? Cheers. The mere mention of Trump? Heavy boos. The notion of an oligarchy? Even more boos. At one point, the crowd chanted the campaign slogans that helped Mamdani win the Democratic nomination in the race. “We will freeze the?” Mamdani asked. The booming response: “Rent!” “Make buses fast and?,” he continued. “Free!,” the audience yelled. The town hall — part of Sanders’ “Fighting Oligarchy” tour, which has drawn massive crowds in red and blue states alike — packed an auditorium in Brooklyn as Mamdani’s campaign barrels toward the November election. He is facing off against former Gov. Andrew Cuomo and incumbent Mayor Eric Adams, who are both running as independents, along with Republican Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels **SEE MAMDANI, A2**



Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., left, and New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani speak during a town hall on Saturday. Olga Fedorova, Associated Press

BULLS HEAD Miracle exhibit

Hundreds visit Our Lady of Pity Church to view an exhibit created by newly canonized teen saint Carlo Acutis. A3

SNUG HARBOR BBQ bash

Pitmasters serve up smoky meats and local flavor as the popular Pig Island BBQ Fest returns to Staten Island. A7

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