

# West 104<sup>th</sup> Street

DECEMBER 2024

BLOCK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## A Community of Cooks

Allrecipes' manager Molly Fergus talks about the site's special flavor.

By Hayley Elszasz

As the days shorten, the wind turns chilly and holidays offer more opportunities to gather, one of the greatest comforts is cooking at home. If you're like me, you've turned to Allrecipes as an online staple for inspiration and guidance. Allrecipes is a vast online resource that can help you navigate nearly any cooking or baking project you could conceive of. But did you know that our block is home to a leader who helps run this website? I sat down with block resident Molly Fergus to learn more about the joys of home cooking—whether it's trying something new or sticking with comforting favorites—and how our friendly community fuels her.



Molly Fergus

**How long have you worked at Allrecipes, and what are your main responsibilities there?** I've worked at Allrecipes since 2021, and I've been at our parent company, Dotdash Meredith, since 2013. I'm the SVP and General Manager for Allrecipes, which means I'm responsible for the editorial and business strategy. I help determine our editorial calendar for the year, partner with sales on ad campaigns, and work with our tech team to build new tools on site. Oh, and I get to try an inordinate amount of gimmicky new snack foods we're sent to cover—pumpkin spice pretzel chips are actually quite good!

**What do you find unique about Allrecipes?** Allrecipes began as a user generated recipe site, meaning that every recipe was submitted by home cooks from across the country, not made in a test kitchen by recipe developers. When you make one of our recipes, you're recreating someone's grandma's comforting casserole or favorite chocolate chip cookies. There is a real sense of community on the site.

**What are some of your favorite recipes?** We are at the start of soup and stew season, so I've been stocking our freezer with  
*continued on page 3*

## Here Comes the Sun

The 34th Annual Yard Sale saw success and sunshine in equal parts

Brilliant sun and comfortable early fall temperatures greeted the vendors, volunteers and Block Association members setting up on September 21. After several years of bad weather forcing last-minute rescheduling, the Yard Sale finally had a perfect day.

People streamed down the block from early morning on, eager to nab bargains and enjoy a quintessential Upper West Side event. The Anderson Brothers Quartet brought the zing of New Orleans-style jazz to the noon hour, and Shailah and the Shaylettes brought the afternoon to an upbeat close with Shailah's fierce rendition of "I Will Survive."



Shailah Edmonds

The raffle tables saw an unusual amount of ticket sales, pushing the final pot, split between the Block Association and a lucky winner, over \$6000. A bidding war erupted over a 1940s cityscape in oils that was donated that morning to the Silent Auction by block resident Susan Goldman. The book table was a hub for the action at the foot of the block and What-a-Bargain drew in the crowds at the top.

The money raised each year at the Yard Sale goes to block plantings, the security guard, care and pruning of the block trees and other projects.

## Please Donate to the Holiday Food and Toy Drive

The Block Association's fifth annual Food and Toy Drive will run from December 7 to December 15th. We have partnered once again with City Harvest, which stocks food pantries all over the city, and with several women's shelters. Good food items to donate include soup, canned fruit/vegetables, canned tuna, peanut butter, cereal and juice packs. Please make sure that the food items are not past their use-by date. New or gently used toys for ages from toddler to teen are welcome. Donation boxes will be available in many block buildings including 315 Riverside Dr., 320 Riverside Drive, 895 West End Avenue, 905 West End Ave. and 309 West 104th Street. If you have questions, please email [peter.b.littlewood@gmail.com](mailto:peter.b.littlewood@gmail.com).

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Contributors to the December Issue:  
 Barbara Boynton, Hayley Elszasz, Mary Koval, Nancy Lian,  
 Lynn Bender Max, Hanna Rubin (editor), Larry Stern, Steve Zirinsky.  
 Newsletter designer: Brian Hajjar. Advertising: Jennifer Jones.

The Block Association wishes to extend special thanks to  
 Paula Zirinsky for photographing the Yard Sale from start to finish.



Block president Steve Zirinsky presents a check for \$3149.72 to first place raffle winner Shelby Drescher.

# YARD SALE FINANCIALS

## INCOME 2024

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Raffle.....         | \$2,999.72         |
| Merchandise.....    | \$2,572.61         |
| Baking.....         | \$1,755.50         |
| Books.....          | \$1,949.11         |
| Silent Auction..... | \$3,000.00         |
| Bargain.....        | \$1,045.00         |
| Vendor Tables.....  | \$4,197.88         |
| Misc E Sales.....   | \$575.77           |
| <b>Total.....</b>   | <b>\$18,095.59</b> |

## EXPENSES 2024

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Flyers/Signs..... | \$531.81           |
| Permits/Fee.....  | \$894.30           |
| Tips/Movers.....  | \$850.00           |
| Supplies.....     | \$228.90           |
| Merchandise.....  | \$915.38           |
| Insurance.....    | \$330.00           |
| Music.....        | \$900.00           |
| Bathroom.....     | \$408.28           |
| <b>Total.....</b> | <b>\$5058.67</b>   |
| <b>NET.....</b>   | <b>\$13,036.92</b> |

# WEST 104 BLOCK ASSN BOARD

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| President Steven Zirinsky | 315 RSD |
| VP Mary Jo Gennaro        | 315 RSD |
| Treasurer Mary Koval      | 895 WEA |
| Secretary Larry Stern     | 315 RSD |

## MEMBERS

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Hayley Elszasz          | 314 W 104 |
| Alex Grannis            | 895 WEA   |
| Stephen Helman          | 315 RSD   |
| Jennifer Jones          | 315 RSD   |
| Joyce Mann              | 309 W 104 |
| Martin Mann             | 309 W 104 |
| Lynn Max                | 315 RSD   |
| Hanna Rubin             | 315 RSD   |
| Gary Waskow             | 320 RSD   |
| Nancy Lian (ex officio) | 320 RSD   |



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## Riverside Park Leaf Raking

West 104th Street residents, recruited by the Block Association and other volunteers lent a hand leaf-raking in Riverside Park on November 16.

### A Community of Cooks *continued from page 1*

this simple but satisfying Greek lentil stew (don't skip the drizzle of vinegar at the end!) (<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/137650/greek-lentil-soup-fakes/>); I've got a big batch of birria waiting for a rainy night (<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/235755/birria-recipe/>); and I've taken to blackening chicken or shrimp when we need a quick but not boring dinner at home (<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/263391/blackened-shrimp/>)

**How did you end up working there?** I studied magazine journalism in college and moved to New York to see if could make it in publishing. I started in the digital travel space, at Conde Nast Traveler, then moved to my current company to launch TripSavvy. When we acquired Meredith and Allrecipes in 2021, I knew I was ready for a change and asked to move to the food category. After all, half the reason I travel has always been to eat; this felt like a natural fit.

**Has this job changed how you cook?** Yes! I am much more likely to try new recipes and experiment at home. Before, I stuck to what I knew and wouldn't go too far out of my comfort zone. Experiments aren't always successful - I made a fish broth recently from leftover pompano and blue fish bones that I don't plan to repeat - but I'm always learning.

**What do you enjoy most about life on W 104th St?** The proximity to Riverside Park just cannot be overstated. It's gorgeous year-round, we love the access to playgrounds (we have an 11-month-old daughter - swings are very important to us!), and we are big fans of Ellington in the Park when it's warm out. Our block is beautiful and everyone is friendly; my husband and I are always saying how lucky we are to live here. It feels like we found a true oasis in the city.

## Stumped by Bloomingdale Trivia

The November 7th Bloomingdale Bites, co-sponsored by the West 104th Street Block Association, the West 102/103rd Block Association and the Columbus-Amsterdam Business Improvement District, featured a trivia contest with all the questions (and answers) based on our Bloomingdale neighborhood.



Even though the event, which was hosted at the International Youth Hostel on Amsterdam and West 103rd Street, took place two days after the election, 45 people attended with everyone having ample space to spread out and enjoy plenty of food contributed from eight establishments. Once the group was arranged in 14 trivia teams, strangers soon became best of friends. Everyone shared their knowledge to give their best answers to quirky questions about our Bloomingdale neighborhood.

It was a lot of fun for all with gift cards for some of the restaurants presented to the first, second and third place winners. A huge thanks to volunteers from our block association as well as the West 102/103 Block Association and the Columbus/ Amsterdam BID for their work organizing and the Youth Hostel for the use of their space.

If you missed it, have no fear. The program will be repeated again in June 2025.

- Steve Zirinsky



**Jesse I Berger, MBA**  
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# Glowing Strong

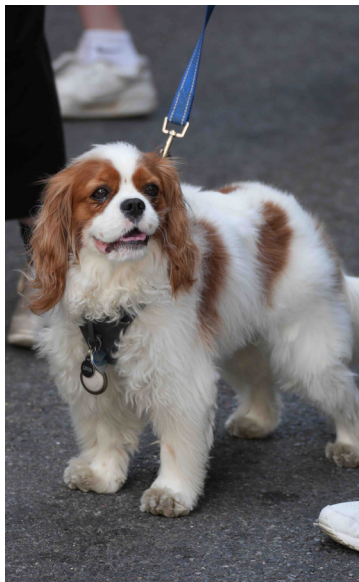
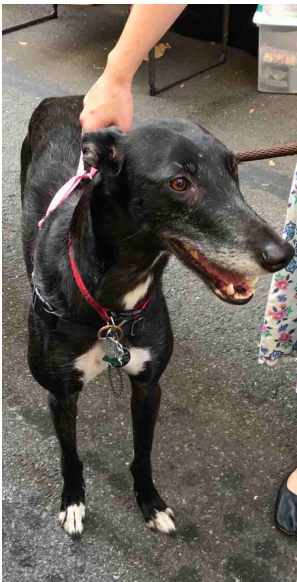
The 34th Annual Yard Sale drew bargain hunters and browsers that thronged West 104th Street all day long.  
Photos by Barbara Boynton, Lynn Max, Larry Stern and Paula Zirinsky



Clockwise from upper left: Block president Steve Zirinsky with New York City Council member Gail Brewer; crowds turned out early; The Anderson Brothers Quartet played jazz classics; Block Association board member Joyce Mann organized the popular “What-a-Bargain” tables; items for sale ranged from pottery to memorabilia to clothing.



Clockwise from left: Block Association board members Nancy Lian and Mary Jo Gennaro with Margaret Beels (middle) selling raffle tickets; the mid-block raffle table with Jesse Berger and Jennifer Jones also was busy; Deborah Goldberg dished up treats at the bake table; Joyce Mann shows three block visitors all the right moves to Shailah and the Shaylettes; local Council member Shaun Abreau (center); canine shoppers.





Clockwise from top: Demonstrating what can be learned at Bloomingdale School of Music; the raffle drum with the winning tickets—the winner took home \$3149.72; block residents Kira and pup Zoe take a rest; Shailah led a set of classic Motown and rock covers; Block Association board member Larry Stern organized the Silent Auction.





Clockwise from left: The book table drew crowds all day; Lydia Dufour helped at the Silent Auction; Kay Cynamon led the clean up efforts and made sure recyclables were handled properly; shoppers hunting for finds; Teresa Elwert swept the block before set-up; Steve Max managed the sound system all day; more book bargains.



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# *Please Thank Our Generous Donors Who Supported the Yard Sale*

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**Book Culture**

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**The Ellington**

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**West 104<sup>th</sup> Street Yard Sale**

**Sponsored by the West 104<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association**

# Thank You Volunteers and Helpers!

*We couldn't do it without you.*



Steve Zirinsky: “After the Yard Sale, people (residents, doormen, stand holders, shoppers, etc.) came up to me and thanked me for such a wonderful event. And it was. To each of them, I would say that it takes a large cast of dedicated workers and volunteers to make the whole event work as well as it does. As evidence, here is the list of the Yard Sale volunteers who made this year’s event possible. And to each of you, I say, “Thank you!”

## **BAKERS**

Steve Akeson  
Pauline Brookfield  
Jane Cohen  
Karen Collins  
Sandi Cooper  
Rodica Cristea  
Cathy Cuthell  
Kay Cynamon  
Arlene Danford  
Janie Deegan  
Miriam Duhan  
Lauren Flowers  
Tova Getoff  
Deborah Goldberg  
Alex Grannis  
Cathia Grima  
Orli Himmelweit  
John Krinsky  
Nancy Lian  
Dalia Maheu  
Lynn Max  
Meaghan and Nick  
Onofrey  
Carol Praeger  
Steve Pred  
Katherine Randall  
Vicki Roth  
Hanna Rubin  
John and Patty Smith  
Elizabeth Stone  
Donna Tapper

Nancy Tarshis  
Paul Ziegler

## **BAKE TABLE VOLUNTEERS**

Pauline Brookfield  
Jane Cohen  
Cathy Cuthell  
Everest deMontebello  
Miriam Duhan  
Bonnie Dry  
Tova Getoff  
Deborah Goldberg  
Alex Grannis  
Rita Houlihan  
Lynn Max  
Carol Praeger  
Cullen Stanley  
Donna Tapper

## **RAFFLE PRESALE VOLUNTEERS**

Jessie Berger  
Barbara Boynton  
Barbara Bryan  
George Carmel  
Karen Collins  
Lydia Dufour  
Hayley Elszasz  
Teresa Elwert  
Mike Fara  
Mary Jo Gennaro

Deborah Goldberg  
Alex Grannis  
Ruth Helfrich  
Stephen Helman  
Jennifer Jones  
Mary Koval  
Nancy Lian  
Richard Loebel  
Joyce Mann  
Martin Mann  
Lynn Max  
Edafe Okporo  
Ilene Pfeiffer  
Hanna Rubin  
Karen Scher  
Mark Smith  
Cullen Stanley  
Larry Stern  
Elizabeth Titus  
Una Walsh  
Sharon Waskow  
|Steve Zirinsky

## **YARD SALE RAFFLE SALES**

Margaret Beels  
Jesse Berger  
Lita Blanc  
Barbara Bryan  
Mary Jo Gennaro  
Jennifer Jones  
Nancy Lian

Steve Medcraft  
Lani Sanjek  
Mark Smith  
Una Walsh

## **WHAT-A-BARGAIN**

Carol Goodfriend  
Sari Goodfriend  
Annie Gross  
Orli Himmelweit  
Karen Odom  
Joe Rappaport  
Elizabeth Stone  
Paul Zeigler

## **BOOK TABLE VOLUNTEERS**

Emily Berleth  
Marnie Dupuis  
Teresa Elwert  
Martin Mann  
Roberta Marshall  
Tom Monaco  
Edafe Okporo  
Steve Pred  
Katharine Randall  
Barbara Rothenberg

## **BOOK SORTERS**

Emily Berleth  
Hayley Elszasz

Steve Pred  
Katherine Randall  
Patty and Jon Smith  
Sharon Waskow

## **SILENT AUCTION**

Lydia Dufour  
Hanna Rubin  
Larry Stern  
Julie Weisman

## **VENDOR TABLES**

Gary Waskow

## **SOUND AND MUSIC**

Steve Max  
Ira Gershenhorn

## **SET UP**

Teresa Elwert  
Dan Jenkins  
Gary Waskow  
Steve Zirinsky

## **BREAKDOWN**

Kay Cynamon  
Steve Zirinsky

(We thank everyone for their generosity. If we have inadvertently left you off this list, please email Lynn Max at [lynnbendermax@gmail.com](mailto:lynnbendermax@gmail.com) so we can thank you in the next issue of the newsletter.)

# Planet Friendly Holiday Gift Guide 2024

By Sharon Waskow

The holidays are coming! “Tis the season to be jolly” the carol goes. But for many of us right now, that’s a tall order. Want to chase the blues away? Make a commitment to work locally to ensure a clean, healthy environment in your neighborhood. As Barack Obama reminds us, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

## Gifts for Your Community

Give the gift of keeping your neighborhood clean and healthy by joining the Sanitation Foundation’s “Adopt Your Spot” program ([www.sanitationfoundation.org](http://www.sanitationfoundation.org)). You adopt a nearby spot to keep clean on a regular basis (tree guard, storm drain, gutter etc.) This keeps debris and plastic litter from washing down the drains and becoming microplastics which pollute the water, animals and us. Enlist the help of a neighbor or child.

Stay in touch with our elected officials to let them know what needs addressing in our neighborhood climate wise. They are often looking for legislative ideas. If they don’t hear from constituents how will they know what’s needed? Shaun Abreau represents us on the New York City Council, Micah Lasher will represent us in the State Assembly starting in January and Cordelle Cleare is our State Senator.

## Gifts for the Kitchen

Give non-Teflon coated cookware. Why? Teflon-coated pans contain PFAS, toxic chemicals used to make plastic which when heated leach into our food. Choose from these non-stick choices like Caraway Cookware or Greenpan.

Give a zero waste cookbook. Why? In the U.S. we waste 60 mil-

lion tons of food a year! Consider The Zero Waste Cookbook and The Zero Waste Chef. Now that mandatory composting is here, give a stylish countertop food scrap countertop bin. Consult Wirecutter for good suggestions or shop local at University Hardware.

## Give Experiences

Consider getting memberships to museums, botanical gardens (like Wave Hill in Riverdale), New York Society Library and the Joyce Theater. In our neighborhood, consider giving dance lessons at Bridge for Dance or music lessons at Bloomingdale School of Music. Or you can give pottery lessons at Supermud Pottery or tennis lessons in Riverside Park (visit [www.tennisinnovators.com](http://www.tennisinnovators.com)), or knitting classes at Knitty City a little further down the West Side.

## For Kids

Help younger children learn to enjoy nature with gifts from Thimble and Twig. For teens, check out [www.powerfullyouth.com](http://www.powerfullyouth.com), which has a teen sustainable gift guide.

## No Cost Gifts

Help a friend or family member with an organizing project. Examples include; a leftover container drawer (toss out plastic containers and suggest replacing with glass, metal or silicone); a clothes closet: donate little worn clothes to local Housing Works; a book shelf; an underused toy bin; the pantry.

Most importantly this holiday season, hold your loved ones close, donate to environmental organizations and efforts to bring peace in the world. Keep hope alive.

From your friends at It’s Easy Being Green ([www.iteasybeinggreen.org](http://www.iteasybeinggreen.org)).

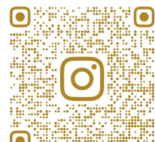
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## THE GRAND FEAST

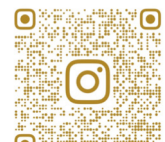
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## NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

### BABYSITTING

Experienced and eager block resident looking to babysit days, nights, and weekends. I'm a lifelong Upper West Sider and rising University of Michigan Senior. Looking forward to connecting, and please reach me on my cell at 917-834-3603.

### BLOOMINGDALE AGING IN PLACE

(BaiP) Bloominplace.org

BAiP is an intergenerational volunteer network of neighbors working to help older residents to continue living at home safely and comfortably. BAiP sponsors social and cultural activities, provides educational tools, and a helping hand for those in need through its Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) program. The latter takes the form of providing help going places, running errands, light shopping, accompaniment at home or outdoors, and information. If you want to contact N2N for this kind of assistance, or to talk about volunteering, e-mail: N2N@bloominplace.org, or call: 212.842.8831 to leave a message with your contact information. Either way, a BAiP member will respond promptly.

### MEDICARE & AARP/UNITED HEALTH CARE MEDICARE PLANS.

I am a BAiP member and licensed independent agent with the AARP/United Health Care Medicare plans. I am happy to help you understand Medicare and Medicare plan options (no cost). Please feel free to contact me at (cell) 914-419-5499 or (email) susanmschorphd@gmail.com.

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### YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE PUBLICIZED FREE!

Publicize your neighborhood service (babysitting, dog walking, apartment cleaning, etc.) free in the newsletter and on our web site for one year, renewable. To submit an ad mail/deliver this information to Hanna Rubin, Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net. For our records: Your name and mailing address For publication: Your name, contact method (phone or email address), description of your service

The block association board meets once a month. We enjoy having residents attend the meetings. Please let us know if you would like to attend one and we will send you an invitation. [steve@zirinskyarch.com](mailto:steve@zirinskyarch.com)

### Contribute to the Newsletter

Interested in writing or photographing for the West 104<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association newsletter? Have suggestions about what to cover in the neighborhood? Want to share block news, suggest a profile, send a photo? Please send an email to Hanna.Rubin@verizon.net. Your ideas are welcome.

### Check Your Junk Folder

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Suggestions for the block: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to West 104th Street Block Association Inc.

Please send to our vice-president, Mary Jo Gennaro, 315 Riverside Dr., Apt. 7C, NY NY 10025 or leave with one of the following:

**M. Mann: 309 W. 104, Apt 3A**

**A. Grannis: 895 West End Ave.**

**G. Waskow: 320 RSD, Apt. 8G**

**Mary Jo Gennaro: 315 RSD, Apt. 7C**