

# THE BRONX FIRST, METRO I.A.F. FOUNDING ASSEMBLY



“Tonight, you came here as part of one church, mosque or non-profit. We are leaving as one organization,”  
Eileen Torres, BronxWorks

**Fordham University**  
**February 5, 2026**

*The New York Times* “Roughly 2,000 people across faiths, generations and socioeconomic statuses filled the auditorium at Fordham to vote to formalize their coalition. Their attendance marked a unique show of political power among groups not often seen in concert with one another.”



“The Bronx has been last for too long. The Bronx will be first because you are here, and now we have power. Mayors, governors are not held accountable. That starts today with the founding of our new Bronx Metro Industrial Areas Foundation organization, *The Bronx First*,”  
Haji Dukuray, The Islamic Cultural Center



**“Our Bronx housing crisis will swallow us up if we don’t act together. The Bronx is the last stand in New York to produce truly affordable homes to own or rent. Many older buildings are in dire need of repairs. NYCHA is crumbling. I’m a direct beneficiary of Metro IAF leaders who shaped my family’s future. My mother was an elementary school teacher raising seven children on her own. We were able to buy a Nehemiah home built by Metro IAF leaders. It transformed our lives. Big power leads to big changes”** Nina Simone, New Settlement



**“I am very moved to see Christians, Muslim and Jews come together.”**  
Imam Maddasir Husayn,  
Masjid Noor-ul-Huda Islamic Center

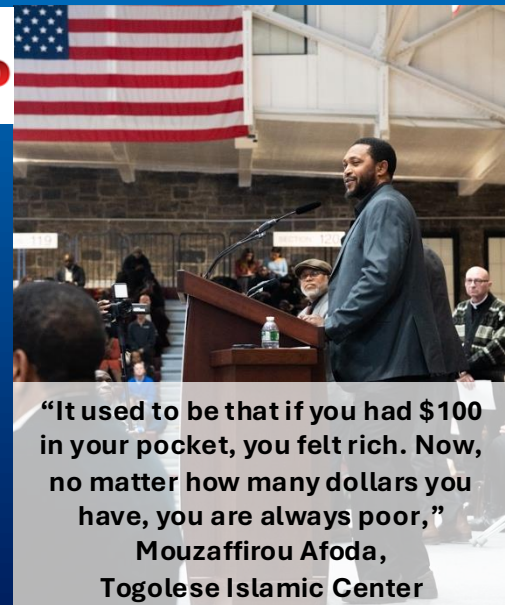
**The New York Times** *“Leaders more focused on accountability not access.”*



**“The Bronx has been last in housing, education, jobs and healthcare. That changes today,”**  
Maria Lizardo, NMIC



**50 mosques,  
churches,  
non-profits &  
associations.  
Self-financed  
Non-partisan  
Locally-  
controlled**

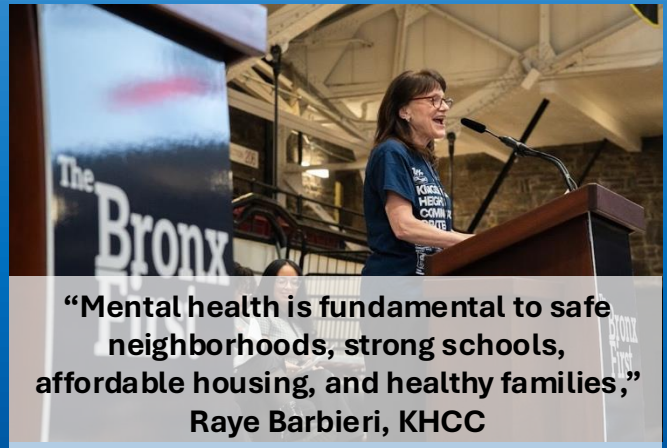


**“It used to be that if you had \$100 in your pocket, you felt rich. Now, no matter how many dollars you have, you are always poor,”**  
Mouzaffirou Afoda,  
Togolese Islamic Center

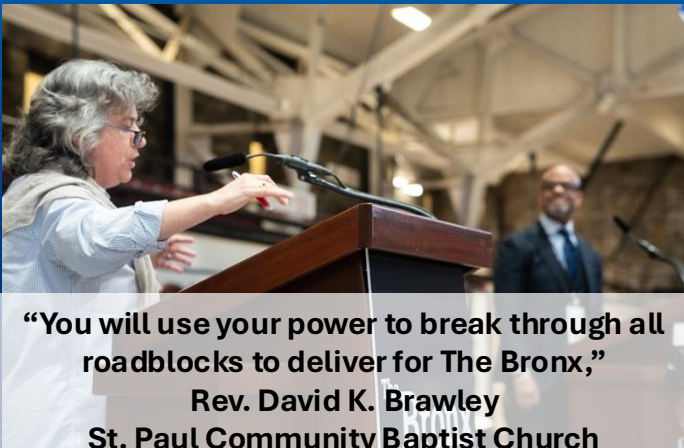
**“It’s true: crime has declined across the city. But for all immigrants, for Muslims, for anyone who is not a tourist, this city can still be very dangerous. You can be punched in the face while going to pray or murdered on the way home from work or school. ICE is making people afraid but the city’s failure to keep us safe on the sidewalk or in our homes is killing us. It doesn’t have to be this way,”**  
**Aboubakar Amadou, Omar Islamic Center**



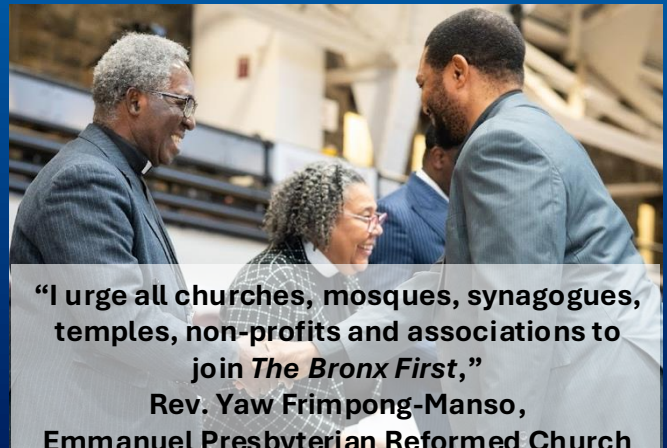
**“We are organized faith translating moral conviction into civic action,”**  
**Rev. James Duckett**  
**Fort Motte Baptist Church**



**“Mental health is fundamental to safe neighborhoods, strong schools, affordable housing, and healthy families,”**  
**Raye Barbieri, KHCC**



**“You will use your power to break through all roadblocks to deliver for The Bronx,”**  
**Rev. David K. Brawley**  
**St. Paul Community Baptist Church**



**“I urge all churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, non-profits and associations to join *The Bronx First*,”**  
**Rev. Yaw Frimpong-Manso,**  
**Emmanuel Presbyterian Reformed Church**



**The RIVERDALE PRESS** *“The partnership spans churches, mosques, nonprofits and other community-based groups. Several key goals united them: truly affordable housing, improved mental health care services, safer streets, and better schools and employment opportunities.”*



**“Metro IAF successfully pressured mayor after mayor to build new homes, start new schools, renovate parks and shut down crime dens. Now is our chance in The Bronx.”**  
**Fr. William Sheahan, Ciszek Hall, Fordham University**

