

June 19, 2019

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor, New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Dr. Oxiris Barbot
Commissioner, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Re: Cross Country Athletes and Lyme Disease

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Carranza and Commissioner Barbot:

I hope this letter finds you all well.

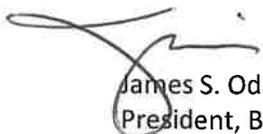
I have enclosed a copy of a letter I received from two student-athletes at Gaynor McCown High School here on Staten Island. They are track enthusiasts in general, and cross country runners in particular. Their suggestions are simple and will cost little or nothing, but the value they might have could be very great, indeed.

They are concerned – as well they should be – that not enough is being done to educate track coaches and runners on the dangers of tick bites gotten while running through trails and pathways in wooded areas. (I want to inform you at this juncture that the school they attend does not have a track *per se*, and they are forced to practice on a daily basis on such trails.)

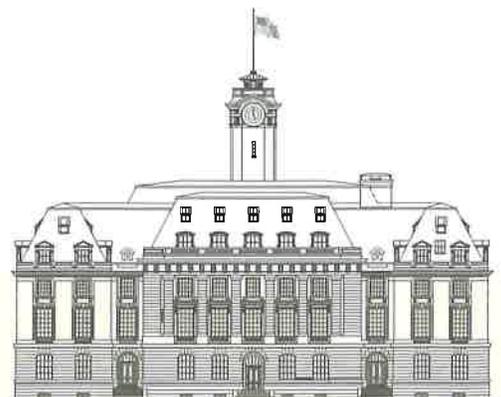
Please take the few moments necessary to read their letter. I hope you will agree that they outline a simple, common sense approach to what could be a serious problem.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I hope to hear from you with your thoughts on these suggestions at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island



Gaynor McCown
100 Essex Drive
Staten Island, N.Y. 10314

05/29/2019

Borough President James s. Oddo
10 Richmond Terrace
Borough Hall, Room 120
Dear Borough President James s. Oddo:

Our names are Shane Gardner, and Jenna Alijla , and we reside in Staten Island, New York. We are juniors at Gaynor McCown High School.

We are writing to ask that you help make Cross Country athletes and, their parents, aware of the dangers of contracting Lyme Disease while practicing and racing. Both of us have participated in Cross Country where we run through trails and pathways in wooded areas, around the five boroughs. These wooded areas have a large population of ticks with the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the culprit of Lyme disease. In 2016 there were 123 cases of Lyme Disease on Staten Island. With this in mind we would like to propose mandatory tick checks for all PSAL Cross Country athletes after their races and practices.

We can achieve this by taking simple steps toward ensure our safety. In September, coaches should be mandated to watch an educational video on the dangers of Lyme disease and how to perform tick checks. Next, at the beginning of the season, letters should be sent home to parents informing them of the impacts of Lymes disease and the mandatory tick checks that we are requiring. During the first practice, coaches will educate participaties on how to do tick checks in depth with one another. During the year, the coaches will make time after practice for students to help one another do tick checks. Parents will be reminded to ask their children if they have completed their tick checks, and if not, to do so at home.

We believe that these simple steps could prevent our PSAL athletes from potential tick bites and exposure to Lymes disease. Thank you for your time and considering our proposal.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in cursive. The signature on the left is 'Jenna Alijla' and the signature on the right is 'Shane Gardner'. Both are written in black ink.

Jenna Alijla, Shane Gardner