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Message from CEO of Bronx-Manhattan North Assn. of Realtors: Expanding the Realtor brand

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The Bronx Manhattan North Association of Realtors was founded in 1924, but its roots go back further. In 1825, there was the Real Estate Exchange with offices on Wall St. Brokers in New York City exchanged listings. Hence, the mailings of an early form of the multiple listing service.

Organized cooperation between members in the profession generated enthusiasm for the first official meeting of this Association which was held in the YMCA on 163rd St., on April 28, 1924, and named the Real Estate Board of the Bronx. In 1973, the association changed its name to the Bronx Board of Realtors.

With the approval of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) the name changed again on October 14, 1997, to The Bronx-Manhattan Association of Realtors. In May 2000, in an accommodation and agreement with NAR, the name was amended to The Bronx-Manhattan-North Association of Realtors, better known as BM-NAR, and was allowed to maintain its Manhattan territory north of 145th St. In short, our territory covers Upper Manhattan and all of The Bronx.

In early February 2018, while attending the New York State Association of Realtors Mid-Winter Meetings at Verona, I learned NAR approved a business plan submitted by Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR) to expand the Realtor brand south of 145th St. in Manhattan. The approved plan allowed HGAR to recruit applicable brokers in Manhattan, where the broker pays membership dues without requiring all the agents in that firm to pay dues for three years. I applauded all efforts to grow the Realtor brand and decided to follow HGAR's lead by submitting a business plan to NAR to grant BMNAR the same waiver so we can expand the Realtor brand north of 145th St.

In BM-NAR's business plan, we have identified 131 real estate offices in Upper Manhattan. Our outreach plan is to use a grassroots approach to recruit non-Realtor members. We will seek to establish a partnership with The Washington Heights Business Improvement District (WH BID). The WH BID supports 250 commercial storefronts in a 29-block commercial district along 181st St. from Amsterdam Ave. to Fort Washington Ave., Broadway between 179th and 182nd St. and St. Nicholas between 179th and 183rd St. The BID collaborates with city agencies and local constituents such as elected officials, businesses, property owners and residents to enhance the district. The WH BID is using their website, social media programs and e-mail marketing campaigns, to promote the district to tourists, realtors, developers and business owners.

BM-NAR will also seek to partner with Manhattan Community Planning Board 12 (consisting of two neighborhoods—Inwood and Washington Heights) as well as The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. A partnership with these groups will help us identify other non-Realtor members. Their help will also be invaluable in developing outreach tools that captures the flavor of the target area.

On November 1, 2018, at the NAR Conference & Expo in Boston, Ma., I presented and defended BM-NAR's business plan to NAR's Finance Committee. After listening to our operations and promotions plan to expand the Realtor brand in Upper Manhattan, the Committee came back the next day with great news. The Committee decided to include BM-NAR to the existing Manhattan recruitment strategy and granted us a two-year dues waiver.

Our outreach campaign to recruit new members north of 145th St. will begin in January of 2019. However, if you are a real estate broker in our targeted area, give me a call so we can discuss the benefits of being a member of BM-NAR. Although the Bronx brokers are not part of this recruitment efforts, we are working on a package just for you.

I hope you had wonderful Thanksgiving and if you haven't already done so, please join us for our 34th Annual Holiday Party and Toy Drive on December 12, 2018. New York City's best Holiday Party will include 4 ½ hours of superb buffet selections and drinks; non-stop music and entertainment; a selfie booth; discounts for members and for tables of 10 or more; party at the elegant setting of the Marina del Rey Caterers with extraordinary views of the East River, Whitestone and Throgs Neck Bridge.

For more information and for sponsorship opportunities, please call (718) 892-3000.

"God bless us, everyone!"

Eliezer Rodriguez, Esq. is the chief executive officer of The Bronx-Manhattan North Association of Realtors, Bronx, N.Y.

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