



## **BOROUGH**

# **Queens Heroes**

The locals who are leading the borough through the coronavirus crisis.

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A few years ago, perhaps the big story in Queens was its growing reputation as a tourist destination. Then, in 2018, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez upset then-Rep. Joe Crowley, drawing attention to a rising progressive movement in Western Queens that went on to pressure Amazon into scuttling a plan to build a second headquarters in Long Island City. Over the past few months, however, the borough's biggest storyline has been the devastation wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more people in Queens than in any other county in New York.

Yet Queens pulled together in response to the crisis. At the peak of the pandemic, it was all hands on deck at the borough's hospitals.

Members of the community delivered food to the newly unemployed, while business leaders took steps to protect local shops. Elected officials passed legislation to protect tenants and stepped up to serve their most vulnerable constituents.

So this year, we're not just doing a power list recognizing the influential leaders navigating the borough through a crisis. We're also doing something new – honoring a group of heroes who met the challenge in different ways.

### **Cidric Trinidad**

*Registered Nurse, Visiting Nurse Service of New York*



*Cidric Trinidad*

Whenever Cidric Trinidad notices a piano in the home of one of his patients, he offers to play a song for them – usually the theme song from the 1980 film “Somewhere In Time” – before wrapping up the visit.

“This is what I love about home care ... I feel like I’m visiting a family member,” Trinidad says. “I know my parents miss me playing piano for them.”

Trinidad – who divides his workweek between shifts at the NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital and home care visits as a nurse with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York – grew up in the Philippines, where his parents still live. That’s where he learned to play the piano when he was 6 years old – and where he fell in love with the nursing profession. “This is my calling,” he says. “I know I can help.”

Despite the daily tragedies experienced in his profession, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic, Trinidad says he focuses on the positive impact his work has on patients. And he tries to lift the mood of those around him, baking cupcakes for friends and coworkers, and lasagna for his fiancé, Gavin.

Trinidad’s job as a home care nurse takes him into some of the neighborhoods that were hit hardest by COVID-19, such as East Elmhurst, Queens, where he recently cared for an 87-year-old man whose wife had died of COVID-19 – and who lives with nine other relatives. A frontline worker in a profession that carries one of the highest risks of catching COVID-19, Trinidad says he feels confident that his personal protective equipment – a gown, an N95 mask with a surgical mask on top, an eye shield, gloves, and disposable booties – protects him as he cares for patients. To stay healthy and relieve stress, he runs loops in his neighborhood in Forest Hills, Queens – training for the (virtual) Boston Marathon in September. He chooses his route carefully to avoid crowded areas.

“I can run in Central Park,” he says. “However, I want to protect myself.”