

TRANSIT ALL-STARS

Recognizing our Employees

Our teams across NYCT continue to do incredible things to improve performance and increase customer satisfaction, moving the needle closer to our North Star goals. This month we are showcasing some of our outstanding employees and their contributions.

December 2023 Honorees



Steve Ilardi

Assistant Chief Officer
Department of Subways

Steve Ilardi, Assistant Chief Officer of Automatic Fare Collection and Bus Electronics (AFC & BE) is doing outstanding things to move NYCT to the new generation of fare collection and why we celebrate Steve and his team this month.

Steve began his career as a Revenue Equipment Maintainer in 1992, just as NYCT was in the planning stages of transitioning fare payment from tokens to MetroCard. Fast forward thirty-one years later and Steve is more committed than ever towards driving change and moving customers from MetroCard fare media products to the new OMNY contactless system.

Most recently Steve and the team successfully developed a method to prevent potential fare beaters from back-cocking turnstiles to enter subways without paying. The modified turnstile barrier is being rolled out systemwide and a cost savings to NYCT every day. We salute Steve and the AFC & BE Maintenance team for their innovation and commitment to preserving system integrity.

When asked about his role, Steve said, "Working at NYCT has been a rewarding career and I would not be in the position I am in without the support of my co-workers and my bosses throughout the years. In AFC we have built a strong team which allows all of us to perform to the best of our abilities. I welcome people's new ideas and we all work to make the fare collection equipment available to our customers."

Steve's colleagues said that Steve is an excellent manager and leader. "Steve works across department and division lines to develop a cohesive working group to meet the needs of the department and the organization as a whole. His door is always open, and he welcomes the interactions and challenges it brings."

As a die-hard Mets fan, Steve hopes to have the opportunity to celebrate at least one more championship before retirement.



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Ajay Singh

Superintendent, Electronic
Maintenance Division
Department of Subways

Ajay Singh, Superintendent, Subways Electronic Maintenance Division is being honored because of his successes in implementing innovative projects that revolutionize subway operations.

Ajay holds a Master of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering. He embarked on a transformative journey beginning in 2015 and progressed through the ranks at NYCT that led him to being promoted to Superintendent of the AFC Maintenance Shop in 2021.

Most recently, Ajay was instrumental in developing and implementing a preventative barrier for turnstile back-cocking that mitigates fare evasion at turnstiles across the subway system. Working with his peers across Automatic Fare Collection and Bus Electronics (AFC & BE), Ajay skillfully applied ingenuity and agility to create what is now considered NYCT's standard turnstile design. The modified turnstile barrier is being rolled out systemwide. This initiative is saving NYCT revenue every day while demonstrating to customers how we are protecting our valuable assets.

We salute Ajay for helping NYCT decrease fare evasion in a cost-effective and meaningful way.

When colleagues are asked about Ajay, they say, "Ajay is a strong, softspoken leader. His expertise as a Mechanical Engineer serves NYCT well in assisting various departments to keep customer facing equipment safe and in service. He welcomes and solves new challenges to either modify or design products to make the NYCT system better. Ajay is a shining example of resilience and determination. He approaches every challenge with a positive mindset and belief that anything is possible with hard work and perseverance. He motivates those around him to strive for their goals."

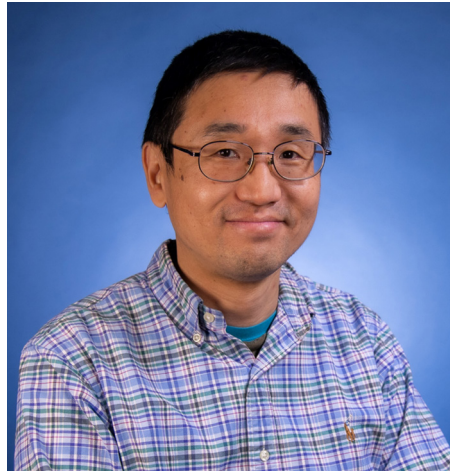
Ajay's love for his three children, dedication to family, and passion for community service make him a truly extraordinary individual. His impact on the lives of others is immeasurable, and his positive influence continues to inspire and uplift those fortunate enough to know him.

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Rasheed Sonson

Systems Administrator, Level 5
MTA IT



Man-lung Lee

Project Manager, Intelligent
Transportation Systems
Paratransit (Access- A-Ride)

Man-lung Lee, Project Manager and Rasheed Sonson, Systems Administrator are being celebrated as Transit All-Stars for their dedicated work and accomplishments to improve Paratransit systems and applications.

Over the past 12 months, Paratransit Access-A-Ride has seen a 16% increase in customer trip demand, with peak weekdays having over 34,000 scheduled trips, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Telephone reservation requests have climbed as well resulting in challenges with keeping up with demand.

Mr. Lee and Mr. Sonson worked as a team, rising to the occasion and after diagnosing the issues, make upgrades to Paratransit's Customer Reservation system. This not only alleviated potential service denigration but resulted in a vastly improved customer experience.

In lockstep, the two worked to quickly tune the system's SQL Database server, added additional processors, and increased memory making their work instrumental in improving Paratransit's ability to serve its customers. Not only does this help customers book rides faster, and improve their overall experience, but these upgrades provided annual cost savings for the agency.

In fact, despite a 7% increase in telephone requests for trip reservations, customers calls were answered 69% faster and customer call abandonment fell by an astounding 71%!

Man-lung Lee is considered by his peers as one of NYCT's dedicated problem solvers, and after holding many diverse roles across MTA, currently manages Paratransit's Eligibility Scheduling Module software. As the original developer of this application more than a decade ago, Man-lung architected the program from the ground up enabling customer eligibility to be certified in an efficient and more expedient way. He continues to be committed to making system upgrades to adjust to changing business needs.



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When asked, his peers said, “Man-lung’s exceptional grasp of business domain is evident, and he continues to excel at every new challenge presented to him.”

Beyond his professional commitments, Mr. Lee finds joy in spending time with family and friends and traveling.

Rasheed Sonson has over thirty years’ IT experience at MTA and dedicates himself to securing and stabilizing MTA’s intricate technology systems. His skills and expertise are extensive, and his quiet confidence is a testament to his extensive and varied professional background.

His peers say that despite his remarkable knowledge, Rasheed remains humble, approachable, and always willing to share his expertise with others.

They said, “Universally respected by those who have crossed paths with him, Rasheed possesses the ability to pose the right questions that unveil the core of any issue”.

His managers consider him to be one of the team’s most reliable and hardworking members. “

A true example to everyone, Rasheed. Beyond his professional commitments, he finds joy in spending time with his wife and four daughters.

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Catrina Williams

General Superintendent
Department of Buses

Catrina Williams is instrumental to the Department of Buses, Transportation Operations Division. She is responsible for the continuing development of bus service management, its analytics, training, and management approach. She is an experienced operations manager with a strong background in data analytics and trend analysis.

Catrina has over 15 years of varied experience in the Department of Buses which include: Maintenance Shop and Administration, Road Operations, and her current department Operations Analysis. Within Operations Analysis she is involved in analyzing bus service management trends. The results of her data analyses directly impact how resources are utilized to improve bus service for our customers.

Among her many accomplishments, Catrina was an integral part of the team dedicated to improving Buses' lowest performing 29 routes. This initiative was intricate and complex, involving many moving parts. To tackle this challenge the team undertook several actions that are showing results. Improvements are being realized in key metrics: Customer Journey Time, Customer Satisfaction, Wait Assessment, Service Delivery, and Bus Bunching. As a result, 30% of the routes have been removed from the "underperforming list" and no longer considered underperforming.

An additional accomplishment for Catrina this year was designing a new Bus Service Management website for Road Operations Management. It is a "one-stop shop" for Transportation Managers to access Key Performance Indicators, training materials, bus route service management guides and various transportation related forms and information. The information and data provided is a great resource to make route performance changes and adjustments to improve the customer experience.

Catrina's passion is helping others develop into future leaders and creating efficiencies in this organization.

A fun fact about her: she loves travelling the world.

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Samer Ayoub

General Superintendent
Department of Buses

Samer Ayoub, General Superintendent of Maintenance Support in the Maintenance Support & Engineering unit for Buses, is being celebrated as a key contributor to several Bus initiatives.

Armed with a BS in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Samer began his career in 2007 at MTA as an entry level electrical engineer. Since that time Samer has acquired a wide range of skills and experience, learning, and practicing the art of vehicle electronics.

Sam has risen steadily through the ranks during his 16-year career at NYCT. As the leader of the Operations Technology group, he oversees the evaluation and integration of new technology systems in buses, their operation as well as maintenance, repair, and upgrade.

As a key member of the Buses team, Sam is leading the successful testing and implementation of the new bus radio system that will replace legacy communications in over 5,800 buses, expansion and retrofit of the Automated Bus Lane Enforcement system, increasing Intelligent Vehicle Network storage, and retrofits for the Digital Information System.

Sam is a hardworking employee who is well liked by his peers. He is an aggressive team leader that provides insightful and experienced direction and guidance to his group. He instills a great work ethic in his staff and sets the bar high while mentoring them for future leadership positions.

On a personal level, Sam is a great friend and colleague to his peers, never passing up the opportunity to spend quality time with them from time to time at office lunches or other social events.

As the father of 2 young boys (pre-teens) Sam is deeply invested in their budding soccer careers along with their other interests.

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Daniel Chen

Director

Department of Buses

Daniel Chen, Director of Buses Process Analysis & Improvement Unit is a Transit All-Star for his accomplishments in managing Maintenance Support & Engineering - Electrical Solutions.

Under Daniel's leadership, Buses' Electrical Solutions team, has been successful applying technical expertise to ensure timely implementation and support for bus electronics, integrations, upgrades, and maintenance.

This team is also responsible for overseeing and investigating electrical system failures, conducting audits, testing, and integrating new systems and bus components.

The team has been successful in retrofitting buses with Automatic Passenger Counting (APC) and OMNY fare collection systems. They wrote troubleshooting trees and guidelines to address issues within installing and testing new systems for E-mirrors, Hearing Loop, bike rack counters, collision avoidance system and auto park brake feature. In addition, the team

is supporting the integration of electric buses in the fleet.

Daniel began his career in public transit seventeen years ago as an entry level electrical engineer. He quickly demonstrated his technical skills and creative aptitude, moving steadily within NYCT to Superintendent and then to Director.

While in Buses, Danny distinguished himself and became a Licensed Professional Engineer.

Danny provides strong leadership to his group and has been described as a great mentor to junior staff.

He has strong family ties and spends a lot of time with them on vacations or participating in cultural events. He takes great pride in raising his 3 sons.

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Michael Karsos

Assistant General Superintendent
Department of Buses

Michael Karsos, Assistant General Superintendent, Queens Bus Road Operations, is a Transit All-Star for his commitment and successes providing effective shuttle bus operations that are necessary and critical to keep New Yorkers moving when subway service is diverted because of scheduled work.

Mike began his 25-year career as a Cleaner/Shifter. While his current role focuses on operations in Queens, he is passionate about New York and the importance bus service is for all New Yorkers.

Mike consistently seeks opportunities to improve safety and training more clarity and efficiency for Surface Line Dispatchers and other employees.

Known by his managers and peers as the ideal team player, Mike is referred to as the “go-to” person. He is an exceptional project manager and ensures that every team member has a meaningful role. His management

says that he demonstrates his skills in organizational structure, and process streamlining with every new challenge.

Mike peers say that Mike leads by example and takes pride in developing the next generation of Road Operations leaders. As an example, while attending the Belmont Stakes Triple Crown at UBS Arena on this day off, he spontaneously began helping displaced LIRR customers when an unexpected service change event occurred. Mike worked across agency lines to help coordinate getting LIRR riders to use NYCT buses for safe arrival to the Queens Village LIRR Station. Clearly, with Mike all bets are on!

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Marva Swaby

Director, Operating & Capital
Budgets
Department of Buses

Marva Swaby, Director of Operating & Capital Budgets, and is a Transit All-Star for leading and overseeing cost-saving opportunities for the Department of Buses

In her role, Marva manages a very small team responsible for identifying, analyzing, and implementing cost savings and reinvestments in accordance with MTA Budget guidelines. Marva's and her team's creativity and business acumen has achieved this, resulting in significant efficiencies and cost reductions across the department. We celebrate her success and that of the entire team.

Managing and forecasting for 18,911 operating and reimbursable employees located across 28 depots and assets that include 5,795 buses, 3 Maintenance Shops, a training School, and Support Fleet and Facilities Operations is no small feat. Marva's twenty-three years' experience, knowledge of operations and NYCT's complex organization are critical for developing and managing NYCT's \$2.4 billion and MTABC's \$1.2 billion operating and capital budgets.

Marva's colleagues say she is a pleasure to work with and admire her exemplary organizational skills. Her guidance and insight into the budgeting process that come with warm and pleasant communications are valued and appreciated by all.

As an empty nester, Marva enjoys traveling, cooking and reading in her spare time.