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BRONX UP CLOSE

Check Our Manhattan Store. Oh Wait, That's Us.

By **SETH KUGEL**

As sign hangers put the finishing touches on one of the chain's trademark bull's-eyes last Wednesday, Saadiq Abdul-Majeed, 3, was inside the Bronx's first Target store, begging for more Spider-Man stuff like a good American consumer. Mom and grandma, Nura and Shaaidah Abdul-Majeed, said no, but their shopping cart was already bursting with Spider-Man bath toys, bedsheets and a decorative pillow.

Perhaps they were feeling generous. They used to take a \$20 cab ride across the Bronx to shop at the Kmart in Co-op City, but now they were shopping just blocks from their home in Kingsbridge. The store, along with Brooklyn's second Target, at Atlantic Terminal, officially opens today. But both quietly opened Wednesday to passers-by. (There are two Targets in Queens.)

Oddly, the first Bronx Target is also the first Manhattan Target. The store sits partly in Kingsbridge, but also partly in Marble Hill, a neighborhood which through a quirk of history is physically on the mainland but officially belongs to Manhattan island. Surveyors told store managers that although customers will shop in the Bronx, the stockroom is actually in Manhattan.

The store is part of a new shopping center called River Plaza - it will include a Marshall's, also opening today, and an Applebee's - that is not without its detractors. The biggest concern is traffic: the stores may be right next to the Major Deegan Expressway, but there is no direct exit to them. Cars must wend their way from the 230th Street exit through several local streets, a fact that prompted residents to press, fruitlessly, for construction of new on- and off-ramps.

But last Wednesday, shoppers and residents across West 225th Street in the Marble Hill Houses, a city housing project, were happy.

"The area looks prettier," said Nurys Brea, 45, who was sitting on a bench outside her building with her parents.

"And safer, too," said her father, Sifredo.

Some local business owners, however, are worried about the competition. They include Unho and Heasook Kim, who own a shoe store called Mr. Footwear that is a few blocks from the new shopping center. "Everywhere big department stores kill small stores," Ms. Kim said.

Yet Alan Kornblau, of Kornblau Supply, a nearby hardware, houseware and janitorial supply business, is not

worried. "For us, it's not going to matter," he said. "We're here since literally before the road. It's about time we got some big stores in."

He quickly qualified his statement: "I wouldn't want Home Depot, but it's Target."

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