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MAYOR BLOOMBERG, MANHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEY VANCE, SPEAKER QUINN, MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT STRINGER, DEPUTY MAYOR FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS CAROL ROBLES-ROMAN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMISSIONER JIMENEZ ANNOUNCE START OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH NEW YORK CITY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

One-stop Service Center Will Provide Assistance to Manhattan's Domestic Violence Victims

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Carol Robles-Román and Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez today announced the official start of construction for New York City's fourth Family Justice Center located in Manhattan and expected to open in 2013. Building on the experience of the three existing Family Justice Centers, the Manhattan Center will provide comprehensive multilingual services to victims of domestic violence and their children, as well as elder abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, and child abuse victims. With only one appointment, victims can meet with a prosecutor; receive legal advice on federal immigration remedies, divorce and custody issues, and orders of protection; talk to a counselor; and apply for emergency housing – all while their children play safely in the next room.

“Our Administration has worked hard to keep New York the safest big City in the nation – and we’ve placed a major focus on making homes safer from domestic violence,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “A key part of our success has been building our network of Family Justice Centers, which have been critical in helping victims reclaim their lives and preventing further violence.”

“Domestic Violence is a public health crisis that robs victims of their safety, security and, too frequently, their lives,” said District Attorney Vance. “We need to make it easier for victims to break out of the cycle of violence and rebuild their lives. In addition to bringing services for victims together under one roof, this unique Family Justice Center will also now house the leadership of my Office’s Special Victims Bureau, including not only the Domestic Violence Unit, but the Sex Crimes Unit, Human Trafficking Program, and Elder Abuse Unit. This Center will provide victims with a wide range of services in one central location, including access to specially trained prosecutors, investigators, advocates, and social service workers. I thank Mayor Bloomberg, Manhattan Borough

(more)

President Stringer, and City Council Speaker Quinn for their commitment to establishing a safe haven for victims of domestic violence.”

“I’m proud to break ground on the City’s fourth Family Justice Center, which provides essential services to victims of domestic violence and their families,” said Speaker Quinn. “The new Manhattan Center will provide New Yorkers with access to emergency shelter and child care services and will prosecute abusers for their crimes. I thank Mayor Bloomberg, Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Jimenez, Manhattan District Attorney Vance, Manhattan Borough President Stringer and my colleagues at the Council for their support of this program. Together, we can empower survivors of domestic violence and help break the cycle of abuse.”

“The Manhattan Family Justice Center will serve as a beacon of hope for thousands of survivors of domestic violence in this borough and will pioneer a new approach for the provision of comprehensive family services,” said Manhattan Borough President Stringer. “Domestic violence remains a serious threat in the lives of too many New Yorkers. But this center will serve as a sanctuary for victims and families looking to build a stronger future and protect their families and themselves. I am proud to have given \$3 million in Capital funding to help make the Manhattan Family Justice Center a reality, and extend gratitude to the Mayor’s Office, the City Council and District Attorney Vance for their generosity and support.”

The Family Justice Center Initiative is part of the Bloomberg Administration’s overall effort to reduce domestic violence and provide comprehensive services to victims. As a result of the City’s focus on this issue, family related crimes have declined by 16 percent citywide since 2001.

The Center will be located in Lower Manhattan at 80 Centre Street in close proximity to various court buildings, including Criminal, Family and Supreme Courts. The District Attorney will co-locate its Special Victims Bureau, including not only its Domestic Violence Unit, but also its Elder Abuse Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, and Human Trafficking Program at the Center, with the Child Abuse Unit next door. This collaboration will expand the Center’s reach to a significant range of the City’s most vulnerable populations.

“The NYC Family Justice Centers provide state of the art services for survivors of domestic violence, and more recently they have identified and helped trafficking victims too,” said Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Robles-Román. “The Manhattan Family Justice Center will be a Family Justice Center in every sense of the word. All vulnerable victims, including teens, trafficked persons and the elderly will greatly benefit from the District Attorney’s Special Victims Unit, working with city agencies and partners to provide much needed criminal justice and social services all under one roof,”

“We want all victims to know that they are not alone and that help is available,” said Commissioner Jimenez of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence. “For thousands of victims of domestic violence this Center will be a safe place where they may begin their path to safety and financial independence.”

“A judicial system that is navigable and accommodating to victims and their families is paramount to the successful prosecution of domestic violence crimes,” said New York City Criminal

Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt. “This center will help victims and their families get comprehensive assistance and necessary services during a single visit to one location.”

“As we have seen over the years, the Family Justice Center model is extremely effective in connecting women and children who are victims of domestic violence to the supportive services they need to escape that abuse,” said Council Member Julissa Ferreras, Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee. “I am incredibly pleased to see that New York City continues to expand the reach of these centers to serve more survivors around the city by breaking ground for a new FJC in Manhattan. This center will bring hope to women who have suffered greatly and give them the opportunity to forge better lives for themselves and for their children.”

“The Family Justice Center of Manhattan is very exciting addition to our community,” said Council Member Margaret Chin. “The Center will get victims of domestic violence on the road to safe and secure housing, and will help them get them the legal and financial assistance they need. The Family Justice Center of Manhattan is located very close to Chinatown, and I know this will be a valuable resource for the Chinese-American community in New York City. In the Chinese-American community, very often victims of domestic or elder abuse are ashamed to come forward. The Family Justice Center will be a culturally sensitive place, where you can get the services you need in a language you can understand. I want to thank Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn, and Borough President Stringer for making this dream a reality.”

The creation of the New York City Family Justice Center in Manhattan will expand on the services already provided to victims of domestic violence at Centers in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and through the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team. Collectively, since 2005, the Centers have assisted over 79,000 clients, and more than 16,000 children have visited the children’s rooms.

The Center will bring together a number of community-based service providers and a wide range of City agencies to reach the collective goal of reducing the number of family violence incidents, recidivism and homicides. The Center will provide victims with a diverse spectrum of services that they need to put their lives back together:

- Civil legal representation for immigration and Family Court matters
- Prosecution of domestic violence crimes
- Safety planning
- Access to emergency shelter and housing
- Assistance with filing police and probation reports
- Public benefits
- On-site childcare
- Counseling for victims and child witnesses
- Support groups
- Services for the elderly and the disabled
- Financial literacy
- Language interpretation




Since January 2002, the City has been developing a more comprehensive and innovative approach to combat domestic violence and hold batterers accountable. The Police Department has more than doubled the number of successful home visits to domestic violence victims since 2001 and has enhanced training for police officers to obtain evidence that could be critical for prosecutions when they respond to a domestic incident. The City has increased the number of emergency shelter beds by 45 percent and transitional housing units by 57 percent for victims of domestic violence. Training is being provided to increasing numbers of front-line City agency staff to enhance awareness and understanding of domestic violence victims' needs and of available resources. Homeless shelters have implemented screening protocols designed to determine if clients need domestic violence services, and to place families in locations where they will be safe from a batterer.

The \$6.5 million New York City Family Justice Center in Manhattan is made possible with the additional support of the Manhattan Borough President's Office, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, and the City Council. To date, the FJC initiative has been a private-public partnership supported by private grants made to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to aiding innovative City initiatives. Private funding of this innovative pilot has helped provide critical evidence of its effectiveness, leveraging the current public investment in the new Manhattan Center. Past supporters of the FJC initiative include The Allstate Foundation, Avon Foundation, Brooke Jackman Foundation, Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, Robin Hood Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Tamara Mellon, OBE, Verizon Foundation and Verizon Wireless HopeLine Program.

For help from the Family Justice Center near you or to support the Family Justice Center Initiative visit www.nyc.gov or call 311

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