



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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**VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REACH MILESTONE
ON THEIR PATH TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Students and victims of domestic violence from the New York City Family Justice Center in Queens today have completed an intensive 10-week English conversation program. Nearly 70% of the Center's domestic violence client population is foreign-born.

The course is designed around *We Are New York*, an Emmy Award-winning television program created to help immigrant New Yorkers practice English while learning about many of the City's resources, including curriculum about domestic violence. *We Are New York* focuses on conversation, vocabulary building, and enhancing fluency.

"English language proficiency can become a key tool for victims of domestic abuse in achieving a life of self-sufficiency and one that is free of abuse," said Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. "Through the *We Are New York* language program, our clients get one step closer to reaching their education, employment, and financial goals."

Since its opening in 2008, the Queens Family Justice Center has helped over 14,000 victims, and over 3,000 children find safety and support in its children's room. Victims can develop a safety plan, apply for an order of protection, meet with an attorney, apply for housing, begin long-term counseling, and receive immigration assistance – all in their own language.

The *We Are New York* program at the Queens Family Justice Center is open to other New Yorkers even if they are not clients of the Center. In fact, often students that seek this English conversation program come to identify themselves as victims of domestic violence once they learn how to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship.

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“All victims of domestic violence are encouraged to seek help regardless of their immigration status or the language they speak,” said Commissioner Jimenez. Victims may reach the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline by calling 311. In case of emergency, they should dial 911.

The New York City Family Justice Center in Queens is a public-private partnership coordinated with the help of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector. The Queens Center is supported by a diverse group of companies, foundations, and citizens which includes: Avon Foundation for Women, Cisco Systems, Inc., City Council, Dell, Inc., Hewlett-Packard Company, IBM Corporation, Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation, NetApp, Inc., Queens Borough President, Verizon Wireless, WebHouse, Inc., and WOR Radio/Dr. Joy to the World Foundation. Additional information on how to make a donation to the New York City Family Justice Initiative is available at www.nyc.gov/fund.

The City’s first Center, in downtown Brooklyn, was opened in 2005, and the third Center in the Bronx, opened in 2010. To date, all three Centers have assisted over 72,000 victims.

We Are New York (WANY) was created through a partnership with the Mayor’s Office and the City University of New York, Office of Academic Affairs. *WANY* is now part of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.

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