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FIRST LADY MCCRAY, COMMISSIONER NOEL OPEN DOORS TO STATEN ISLAND FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

One-stop center provides comprehensive services to domestic violence victims and their children, regardless of income, language, immigration status, gender identity or sexual orientation

With today's opening, de Blasio Administration ensures every victim and survivor has access to help and support in their own borough

NEW YORK—First Lady Chirlane McCray today opened the doors to the Staten Island Family Justice Center. The SIFJC is the fifth in the City's network of wrap-around help centers, to ensure every victim and survivor of domestic violence, elder abuse and sex trafficking is able to seek assistance, safety and legal services near home.

"The first worry of many victims of domestic violence is where to find help or how to find a safe space for herself and her children to sleep. Family Justice Centers are exactly what their name suggests – one central place where clients can restore balance to their lives," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "A survivor in need can meet with a prosecutor, look for housing, apply for financial assistance and get mental health support, all in a safe, welcoming environment. This is how survivors can begin to rebuild healthy lives."

The First Lady was joined at the new 10,000-square foot Family Justice Center at 126 Stuyvesant Place by senior Administration leadership, local elected officials, activists and survivors of intimate partner violence, including Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Herminia Palacio, Commissioner Cecile Noel of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora of the Department of Design and Construction, Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon, Congressman Daniel Donovan and Council Member Debi Rose.

Building on the nationally recognized Family Justice Center model, the SIFJC will provide comprehensive multilingual services to victims of intimate partner violence and their children, as well as victims of elder abuse and human trafficking. The FJC's comprehensive care model

means that in a single visit, 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; learn about educational and job training opportunities; and apply for emergency housing – all while their children play safely in the next room.

“The people of Staten Island now have comprehensive services for survivors of domestic violence, elder abuse, and sex trafficking all under one roof – in this beautiful and welcoming Family Justice Center,” said **Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Herminia Palacio**. “This opening fulfills our pledge to build a Center in every borough, and demonstrates the de Blasio Administration’s commitment to the safety and well-being of every person in New York City. I applaud the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the Department of Design and Construction, District Attorney McMahon, and all the dedicated partners who helped make this vision a reality.”

“In 2014 we heard the call for more services for intimate partner abuse,” said **Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley**. “From 2009 to 2012, Staten Island reported an astounding 51.9 percent increase in domestic violence victims. Today, we respond. Staten Island deserves more support and I’m proud of OCDV for delivering it.”

“Over a decade ago, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence opened the first New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn. Today we are proud to say that, with the opening of the Family Justice Center in Staten Island, there is now a Family Justice Center in each of the five boroughs, providing services and support to victims of domestic violence, elder abuse and sex trafficking,” said **Commissioner Cecile Noel of the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. “Our Family Justice Center network is the most comprehensive in the world and has served almost 130,000 individuals since the first Center opened. Having a single location with wrap-around services, and co-located with the District Attorney’s Office, makes reaching out for help a much less daunting task for victims and survivors. I am grateful for the de Blasio Administration and all our partners who helped bring the Family Justice Center to Staten Island. All New Yorkers should know that they can walk into any Family Justice Center between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, and they can call 311 to be connected to the Centers. You are not alone – there is help.”

The Family Justice Center Initiative is a cornerstone of the de Blasio Administration’s overall effort to reduce domestic violence across the five boroughs and provide comprehensive services and support to victims and survivors. Prior to the construction of the SIFJC, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence operated the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team, which has brought services to over 200 individuals since 2012. Since opening, the City’s four Family Justice Centers have served 129,630 clients and had 337,051 client visits. In 2015 there were nearly 59,000 client visits to NYC Family Justice Centers. The Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence projects that the SIFJC will handle an estimated 3,000 client visits in its first year. Since the “soft” opening of the SIFJC earlier this month, more than 56 individuals have sought services at the Center.

“DDC is proud to deliver, in support of the Mayor’s vision for an environmentally sustainable and equitable city, an inviting and secure Family Justice Center for Staten Island,” said

Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora of the Department of Design and Construction, which managed the design and construction of the new Center. “The DDC team brought the building’s end users into the design process very early on, seeking input from the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence as well as the Richmond County District Attorney’s office. Site visits were conducted to the City’s other Family Justice Centers, and furniture and building materials were selected to appeal to those who access services in the building. This was accomplished while making maximum use of natural light and mechanical systems that minimize the effect on the environment. DDC is committed to Mayor de Blasio’s vision for a healthy and sustainable city and to building well-designed, safe environments that enhance our communities.”

Azadeh Khalili, Executive Director of the Commission on Gender Equity, said, “The opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center is a major milestone in our effort to ensure the safety of New York City’s women and girls, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. The SIFJC will not only help to prevent intimate partner violence in Staten Island, but will provide victims of violence a space and the needed support to heal and get the services they need. Reducing violence against women is a huge step towards gender equity, and I am proud to stand here today with First Lady Chirlane McCray who has been a leader in this fight.”

“DCAS is honored to have been part of the team that helped build out this facility in order that critical services could be provided to survivors of domestic violence in a supportive environment, all under one roof,” said **Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Lisette Camilo**.

New Yorkers in every borough can access the City’s Family Justice Centers by simply walking in during business hours – from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday – or by calling 311. The SIFJC was purposefully constructed in close proximity to various court buildings, including Criminal, Family and Supreme Courts and where the District Attorney will co-locate Assistant District Attorneys from the Domestic Violence Bureau. This collaboration will expand the Center’s reach to a significant range of the city’s most vulnerable populations.

"No New Yorker facing abuse should have to feel stranded," said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. "With the opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center, all five New York City boroughs now have safe spaces for survivors to receive the support they deserve. We must continue to stand up to violence and advocate for New York City's girls, women, and seniors."

“With the unfortunate reality of increased domestic violence incidents in our borough, the opening of this facility gives us a chance to provide necessary resources to victims of domestic violence in one central location,” said **Borough President James Oddo**. “The comprehensive services available at the Family Justice Center will help women, children and families on Staten Island get the help they need without having to leave the borough or go to multiple locations. For victims, it is often challenging and time-consuming to get various domestic violence and legal services, so anything we can do to make this difficult time easier for them will be incredibly beneficial.”

“With the long-awaited opening of a Family Justice Center on Staten Island finally here, victims of domestic violence will have immediate access to the vital resources and services they need, all in a single and convenient location,” said **Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon**. “This facility – co-located with my office in St. George – will provide the warm embrace of comprehensive support services for women, children, and any family member struggling with the pain of domestic abuse. This will help them help us as we work to bring the abusers to justice. It builds on the dedicated work already being done within the community by my team and the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, going one step further to ensure that victims receive the attention and care they deserve so that they no longer have to suffer in silence. I want to thank the Mayor and the First Lady for their dedication to this project, Commissioner Noel and her team, and the pioneers of this effort from the District Attorney’s office – Yolanda Rudich, Wanda DeOliveira, and Tuesday Muller-Mondi – for helping to make this site a reality.”

The creation of the SIFJC comes after the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) successfully operated in the borough since its launch in 2012. DVRT worked with high-risk victims of intimate partner violence and elder abuse and provided multi-agency service plans and coordination to meet the needs of the clients and their children. Over 45 City and State agencies and community-based organizations partnered with DVRT to bring comprehensive services to more than 200 clients. The strong partnership of agencies created through DVRT will be incorporated into the design and implementation of the Staten Island Family Justice Center.

The SIFJC 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 SIFJC will provide victims with a diverse spectrum of services that they need to be safe and to put their lives back together:

Civil legal representation for immigration, matrimonial and family law matters

- Prosecution of domestic violence crimes
- Safety planning
- Assistance with access to emergency shelter and housing
- Assistance with filing police reports
- Public benefits assistance
- On-site children’s services
- Counseling for adults and children
- Financial literacy
- Job and vocational training
- Language interpretation

OCDV has partnered with the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting innovative programs throughout NYC’s five boroughs, to secure support for the FJC initiatives. Private funding of this pilot has helped provide critical evidence of its effectiveness, leveraging the current public investment in the new Staten Island Center. Funding for the Children’s Room and the Training Room at the SIFJC were provided by the Verizon Foundation and the Staten Island Foundation, respectively. Other current supporters of the FJC include The Robin Hood Foundation and The Brooke Jackman

Foundation. For more information, go to www.nyc.gov/fund and follow the Fund on Twitter @NYCMayorsFund.

“Today’s grand opening is the culmination of years of work by so many dedicated public servants,” said **Congressman Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.** “The Family Justice Center began as a vision of mine nearly 10 years ago, and was pursued relentlessly until it became a reality. From conception to buy-in from the administration, to securing funding and a site, through the final design – so many people who are no longer in the limelight deserve much of the credit.

"I want to acknowledge Commissioner Cecile Noel, First Lady Chirlane McCray and the de Blasio Administration for recognizing the need for a Family Justice Center here on Staten Island. Thanks to their efforts, victims and survivors of domestic abuse, human trafficking, and elder abuse now have somewhere to turn for support and services that were not readily available to them," said **State Senator Diane J. Savino.**

“A comprehensive approach is necessary if we are to help victims of domestic violence and prevent it in the first place,” said **Assembly Member Matthew Titone.** “The opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center is an important step and shows the necessary commitment that we are serious about tackling this important issue.”

“Staten Island’s Family Justice Center will fill a significant void for those affected by the horrors of domestic violence and abuse, especially given the recent reported increase in these crimes,” said **Assembly Member Michael J. Cusick.** “Ensuring these individuals receive complete wraparound services in one location, including legal representation, counseling, and assistance with housing and filing police reports will have a tremendous impact on how we care for those affected by violence and abuse. I want to thank the de Blasio Administration, especially First Lady McCray, and all of my colleagues in government for their partnership in bringing this Center to the people of Staten Island.”

Assembly Member Ron Castorina Jr. said, "The Staten Island Family Justice Center will provide much needed, comprehensive services and support to victims and survivors of domestic violence in our borough. Thanks to the efforts of my fellow partners in government, Staten Islanders will no longer have to travel off Island to seek these indispensable services. Domestic violence continues to be an issue that I feel strongly about, and this is a great step forward toward prevention, protection, and healing."

“We hear too often about domestic violence, elder abuse and human trafficking taking place in our community, leaving scars that run deep, from the victims to their children, relatives, and friends,” said **Assembly Member Nicole Malliotakis.** “Until today, we have been the only borough without a Family Justice Center and it is long overdue. The model is one that works, and having our very own on Staten Island will aid victims with the assistance, protection and legal resources they need."

"Staten Islanders who are victims of domestic violence often have to travel across the city to get the help they need to deal with their difficult circumstances. The new Staten Island Family Justice Center will place all of these essential victim services under one roof – from law

enforcement and prosecutors to counselors and legal assistance,” said **City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**. “The opening of this vital community asset could not come at a better time, as our borough has been experiencing a significant spike in domestic violence incidents. I am proud to have worked with our District Attorney and this Administration to help secure the additional funding necessary to tackle this problem.”

“Staten Island’s Family Justice Center will offer a range of services, from assistance with filing police reports and finding housing to providing on-site childcare and counseling, in a beautifully designed building that has safety and comfort worked into every last detail,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**. “The space itself sends a powerful message, that we respect these women and they deserve only the best as they work to rebuild their lives. I thank Mayor de Blasio, and Commissioners Pena-Mora and Noel for their relentless dedication to building this center, which will help countless families get the help they deserve.”

“Our Family Justice Centers play a critical role in providing safe, supportive services – legal, immigration, housing, counseling – under one roof to all New Yorkers. The grand opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center signifies our City’s unwavering commitment to creating a central location that would enable survivors of domestic or intimate partner violence with a safe haven where they can begin their new lives. The presence of these centers in each borough is a victory for Staten Island who will have access to life-saving programs and services right in their own backyard. As Chair of the Committee on Women’s Issues and Co-Chair of the Women’s Caucus, I thank Mayor de Blasio, First Lady McCray, Commissioner Noel, and the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence for their leadership in expanding this vital and life-saving network. Through these partnerships, we can provide the services that will empower families of all backgrounds,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime, so it's our responsibility to make sure survivors have the resources and support they need to find safe housing and return to normalcy. I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for opening the Staten Island Family Justice Center and helping domestic violence survivors get back on their feet," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

“Verizon is proud to partner with the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City and support the opening of the Staten Island Family Justice Center, which will provide victims of domestic violence with access to a centralized and safe location where they may get all of the help that they need,” said **Andrew Testa, PR Manager, Northeast Market, Verizon**. “Through HopeLine by Verizon, we are committed to supporting the efforts of domestic violence organizations to prevent domestic violence, educate communities on cultivating healthy relationships and empower victims and survivors with resources and tools to rebuild and succeed.”

“The Staten Island Foundation looks forward to the work of the Staten Island Family Justice Center in this beautiful new facility to help those in need be supported in the path to successful lives,” said **Betsy Dubovsky, Executive Director of the Staten Island Foundation**.

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